











PELHAM.

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OR

ADVENTURES OF A GENTLEMAN

BY

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON
(LORD LYTTON)

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No!—you cannot guess, my dear reader, how long my pen has rested over the virgin surface of this paper, before even that “No,” which now stands out so bluffly and manfully, took heart and stepped forth. If, peradventure, thou shouldst, O reader, be that rarity in these days—a reader who has never been an author—thou canst form no conception of the strange aspect which the first page of a premeditated composition will often present to the curious investigator into the initials of things. There is a sad mania now-a-days for collecting autographs—would that some such collector would devote his researches to the first pages of auctorial manuscripts! He would then form some idea of the felicitous significance of that idiomatic phrase, “to cudgel the brains!”—Out of what grotesque zigzags, and fantastic arabesques,—out of what irrelevant, dreamy illustrations from the sister art,—houses, and trees, and profile sketches of men, nightmares, and chimeras—out of what massacres of whole lines, prematurely and timidly ventured forth as forlorn hopes,—would he see the first intelligible words creep into actual life—shy streaks of light, emerging from the chaos! For that rash promise of mine, that each work in this edition of works so numerous, shall have its own new and special Preface, seems to me hard, in this instance, to fulfil. Another Preface! what for? Two Prefaces to “Pelham” already exist, wherein all that I would say is said! And in going back through that long and crowded interval of twenty years, since the first appearance of this work,—what shadows rise to beckon me away through the glades and allies in that dim labyrinth of the Past! Infant Hopes, scarce born ere fated, poor innocents, to die—gazing upon me with reproachful eyes, as if I myself had been their unfeeling butcher;—audacious Enterprises boldly begun, to cease in abrupt whim, or chilling doubt—looking now through the mists, zoophital or amphibious, like those borderers on the animal and vegetable life, which flash on us with the seeming flutter of a wing, to subside away into rooted stems and wither-

ing leaves. How can I escape the phantom throng? How return to the starting-post, and recall the ardent emotions with which youth sprang forth to the goal? To write fitting Preface to this work, which, if not my first, was the first which won an audience and secured a reader, I must myself become a phantom, with the phantom crowd. It is the ghost of my youth that I must call up. What we *are*, alone hath flesh and blood—what we have been, like the what we shall be, is an idea; and no more! An idea how dim and impalpable! This our sense of identity, this “I” of ours, which is the single thread that continues from first to last—single thread that binds flowers changed every day, and withered every night—how thin and meagre is it of itself—how difficult to lay hold of! When we say “I remember,” how vague a sentiment we utter! how different it is to say, “I *feel*!” And when in this effort of memory we travel back all the shadow-land of years—when we say “I remember,” what is it we retain, but some poor solitary fibre in the airy mesh of that old gossamer, which floated between earth and heaven—moist with the dews and sparkling in the dawn?—Some one incident, some one affection we recall, but not all the associations that surrounded it, all the companions of the brain or the heart, with which it formed one of the harmonious contemporaneous ring. Scarcely even have we traced and seized one fine filament in the broken web, ere it is lost again. In the inextricable confusion of old ideas, many that seem of the time we seek to grasp again, but were not so, seize and distract us. From the clear effort we sink into the vague reverie; the Present hastens to recall and dash us onward, and few, leaving the actual world around them when they say “I remember,” do not wake as from a dream, with a baffled sigh, and murmur “No, I forget.” And therefore, if a new Preface to a work written twenty years ago, should contain some elucidation of the aims and objects with which it was composed, or convey some idea of the writer’s mind at that time, my pen might well rest long over the blank page;—and houses and trees, and profile sketches of men, nightmares and chimeras, and whole passages scrawled and erased might well illustrate the barren travail of one who sits down to say “I remember!”

What changes in the outer world since this book was written! What changes of thrones and dynasties! Through what cycles of hope and fear has a generation gone! And in that inner world of Thought what old ideas have returned to claim the royalty of new ones! What new ones (new ones then) have receded out of sight, in the ebb and flow of the human mind, which, whatever the cant phrase may imply, advances in no direct steadfast progress, but gains here to lose there;—a tide, not a march. So, too, in that slight surface of either world, “the manners,” superficially alike of the action and the thought of an age, the ploughshares of twenty years have turned up a new soil.

The popular changes in the Constitution have brought the several classes more intimately into connection with each other ; most of the old affectations of fashion and exclusiveness are out of date. We have not talked of equality, like our neighbours the French, but insensibly and naturally, the tone of manners has admitted much of the frankness of the principle, without the unnecessary rudeness of the pretence. I am not old enough yet to be among the indiscriminate praisers of the past, and therefore I recognise cheerfully an extraordinary improvement in the intellectual and moral features of the English world, since I first entered it as an observer. There is a far greater earnestness of purpose, a higher culture, more generous and genial views, amongst the young men of the rising generation than were common in the last. The old divisions of party politics remain ; but among all divisions there is greater desire of identification with the people. Rank is more sensible of its responsibilities, Property of its duties. Amongst the clergy of all sects, the improvement in zeal, in education, in active care for their flocks, is strikingly noticeable ; the middle class have become more instructed and refined, and yet, (while fused with the highest in their intellectual tendencies, reading the same books, cultivating the same accomplishments)—they have extended their sympathies more largely amongst the humblest. And, in our towns especially, what advances have been made amongst the operative population ! I do not here refer to that branch of cultivation which comprises the questions that belong to political inquiry, but to the general growth of more refined and less polemical knowledge. Cheap books have come in vogue as a fashion during the last twenty years—books addressed, not as cheap books were once, to the passions, but to the understanding and the taste—books not written down to the supposed level of uninformed and humble readers, but such books as refine the gentleman and instruct the scholar. The arts of design have been more appreciated—the Beautiful has been admitted into the pursuits of labour as a principle—Religion has been regaining the ground it lost in the latter half of the last century. What is technically called education (education of the school and the schoolmaster), has made less progress than it might. But that inexpressible diffusion of *oral* information which is the only culture the old Athenians knew, and which in the ready transmission of ideas, travels like light from lip to lip, has been insensibly educating the adult generation. In spite of all the dangers that menace the advance of the present century, I am convinced that classes amongst us are far more united than they were in the latter years of George the Fourth. A vast mass of discontent exists amongst the operatives, it is true, and Chartism is but one of its symptoms ; yet that that discontent is more obvious than formerly, is a proof that men's eyes and men's ears are more open to

acknowledge its existence—to examine and listen to its causes. Thinking persons now occupy themselves with that great reality—the People; and questions concerning their social welfare, their health, their education, their interests, their rights, which philosophers alone entertained twenty years ago, are now on the lips of practical men, and in the hearts of all. It is this greater earnestness—this profounder gravity of purpose and of view, which forms the most cheering characteristic of the present time; and though that time has its peculiar faults and vices, this is not the place to enlarge on them. I have done, and may yet do so, elsewhere. This work is the picture of manners in certain classes of society twenty years ago, and in that respect I believe it to be true and faithful. Nor the less so, that under the frivolities of the hero, it is easy to recognise the substance of those more serious and solid qualities which Time has educed from the generation and the class he represents. Mr. Pelham studying Mills on Government and the Political Economists, was thought by some an incongruity in character at the day in which Mr. Pelham first appeared—the truth of that conception is apparent now, at least to the observant. The fine gentlemen of that day were preparing themselves for the after things, which were already fore-shadowed; and some of those, then best known in clubs and drawing-rooms, have been since foremost and boldest, nor least instructed, in the great struggles of public life.

I trust that this work may now be read without prejudice from the silly error that long sought to identify the author with the hero.

Rarely indeed, if ever, can we detect the real likeness of an author of fiction in any single one of his creations. He may live in each of them, but only for the time. He migrates into a new form with every new character he creates. He may have in himself a quality, here and there, in common with each, but others so widely opposite, as to destroy all the resemblance you fancy for a moment you have discovered. However this be, the author has the advantage over his work—that the last remains stationary, with its faults or merits, and the former has the power to improve. The one remains the index of its day—the other advances with the century. That in a book written in extreme youth, there may be much that I would not write now in mature manhood, is obvious; that in spite of its defects, the work should have retained to this day the popularity it enjoyed in the first six months of its birth, is the best apology that can be made for its defects.

E. B. L.

LONDON, 1848.

PELHAM;

OR,

ADVENTURES OF A GENTLEMAN.

CHAPTER I.

Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille ? *—*French Song.*

I AM an only child. My father was the younger son of one of our oldest earls, my mother the dowerless daughter of a Scotch peer. Mr. Pelham was a moderate whig, and gave sumptuous dinners;—Lady Frances was a woman of taste, and particularly fond of diamonds and old china.

Vulgar people know nothing of the necessities required in good society, and the credit they give is as short as their pedigree. Six years after my birth, there was an execution in our house. My mother was just setting off on a visit to the Duchess of D—; she declared it was impossible to go without her diamonds. The chief of the bailiffs declared it was impossible to trust them out of his sight. The matter was compromised—the bailiff went with my mother to C—, and was introduced as *my tutor*. “A man

of singular merit,” whispered my mother “but so shy!” Fortunately, the bailiff was abashed, and by losing his impudence he kept the secret. At the end of the week, the diamonds went to the jeweller’s, and Lady Frances wore paste.

I think it was about a month afterwards that a sixteenth cousin left my mother twenty thousand pounds. “It will just pay off our most importunate creditors, and equip me for Melton,” said Mr. Pelham.

“It will just redeem my diamonds, and refurnish the house,” said Lady Frances.

The latter alternative was chosen. My father went down to run his last horse at Newmarket, and my mother received nine hundred people in a Turkish tent. Both were equally fortunate, the *Greek* and the *Turk*; my father’s horse *lost*, in consequence of which he pocketed five thousand pounds; and my mother looked so charming as a Sultana, that Seymour

* *Where can one be better than in the bosom of one’s family?*

Conway fell desperately in love with her.

Mr. Conway had just caused two divorces; and of course all the women in London were dying for him—judge then of the pride which Lady Frances felt at his addresses. The end of the season was unusually dull, and my mother, after having looked over her list of engagements, and ascertained that she had none remaining worth staying for, agreed to elope with her new lover.

The carriage was at the end of the square. My mother, for the first time in her life, got up at six o'clock. Her foot was on the step, and her hand next to Mr. Conway's heart, when she remembered that her favourite china monster, and her French dog, were left behind. She insisted on returning—re-entered the house, and was coming down stairs with one under each arm, when she was met by my father and two servants. My father's valet had discovered the flight (I forget how), and awakened his master.

When my father was convinced of his loss, he called for his dressing-gown—searched the garret and the kitchen—looked in the maid's drawers and the cellaret—and finally declared he was distracted. I have heard that the servants were quite melted by his grief, and I do not doubt it in the least, for he was always celebrated for his skill in private theatricals. He was just retiring to vent his grief in his dressing-room, when he met my mother. It must altogether have been an awkward encounter, and, indeed, for my father, a remarkably unfortunate occurrence; since Seymour Conway was immensely rich, and the damages would, no doubt, have been proportionably high. Had they met

each other alone, the affair might easily have been settled, and Lady Frances gone off in tranquillity;—those confounded servants are always in the way!

I have observed that the distinguishing trait of people accustomed to good society, is a calm, imperturbable quiet, which pervades all their actions and habits, from the greatest to the least: they eat in quiet, move in quiet, live in quiet, and lose their wife, or even their money, in quiet; while low persons cannot take up either a spoon or an affront without making such an amazing noise about it. To render this observation good, and to return to the intended elopement, nothing farther was said upon that event. My father introduced Conway to Brookes's and invited him to dinner twice a week for a whole twelve-month.

Not long after this occurrence, by the death of my grandfather, my uncle succeeded to the title and estates of the family. He was, as people rather justly observed, rather an odd man: built schools for peasants, forgave poachers, and diminished his farmers' rents; indeed, on account of these and similar eccentricities, he was thought a fool by some, and a madman by others. However, he was not quite destitute of natural feeling; for he paid my father's debts, and established us in the secure enjoyment of our former splendour. But this piece of generosity, or justice, was done in the most unhandsome manner: he obtained a promise from my father to retire from whist, and relinquish the turf; and he prevailed upon my mother to conceive an aversion to diamonds, and an indifference to china monsters.

CHAPTER II.

Tell arts they have no soundness,
 But vary by esteeming;
 Tell schools they want profoundness,
 And stand too much on seeming.
 If arts and schools reply,
 Give arts and schools the lie.—*The Soul's Errand.*

At ten years old I went to Eton. I had been educated till that period by my mother, who, being distantly related to Lord ———, (who had published "Hints upon the Culinary Art"), imagined she possessed an hereditary claim to literary distinction. History was her great *forte*; for she had read all the historical romances of the day; and history accordingly I had been carefully taught.

I think at this moment I see my mother before me, reclining on her sofa, and repeating to me some story about Queen Elizabeth and Lord Essex; then telling me, in a languid voice, as she sank back with the exertion, of the blessings of a literary taste, and admonishing me never to read above half an hour at a time for fear of losing my health.

Well, to Eton I went; and the second day I had been there, I was half killed for refusing, with all the pride of a Pelham, to wash tea-cups. I was rescued from the clutches of my tyrant by a boy not much bigger than myself, but reckoned the best fighter, for his size, in the whole school. His name was Reginald Glanville: from that period, we became inseparable, and our friendship lasted all the time he stayed at Eton, which was within a year of my own departure for Cambridge.

His father was a baronet, of a very ancient and wealthy family; and his mother was a woman of some talent

and more ambition. She made her house one of the most attractive in London. Seldom seen at large assemblies, she was eagerly sought after in the well-winnowed *soirées* of the elect. Her wealth, great as it was, seemed the least prominent ingredient of her establishment. There was in it no uncalled-for ostentation—no purse-proud vulgarity—no cringing to great, and no patronising condescension to little people; even the Sunday newspapers could not find fault with her, and the querulous wives of younger brothers could only sneer and be silent.

"It is an excellent connexion," said my mother, when I told her of my friendship with Reginald Glanville, "and will be of more use to you than many of greater apparent consequence. Remember, my dear, that in all the friends you make at present, you look to the advantage you can derive from them hereafter; that is what we call knowledge of the world, and it is to get the knowledge of the world that you are sent to a public school."

I think, however, to my shame, that notwithstanding my mother's instructions, very few prudential considerations were mingled with my friendship for Reginald Glanville. I loved him with a warmth of attachment, which has since surprised even myself.

He was of a very singular character—he used to wander by the river in the

bright days of summer, when all else were at play, without any companion but his own thoughts; and these were tinged, even at that early age, with a deep and impassioned melancholy. He was so reserved in his manner, that it was looked upon as coldness or pride, and was repaid as such by a pretty general dislike. Yet to those he loved, no one could be more open and warm; more watchful to gratify others, more indifferent to gratification for himself; an utter absence of all selfishness, and an eager and active benevolence, were indeed the distinguishing traits of his character. I have seen him endure with a careless good-nature the most provoking affronts from boys much less than himself; but if I, or any other of his immediate friends, was injured or aggrieved, his anger was almost implacable. Although he was of a slight frame, yet early exercise had brought strength to his muscles, and activity to his limbs; while there was that in his courage and will which, despite his reserve and unpopularity, always marked him out as a leader in those enterprises, wherein we test as boys the qualities which chiefly contribute to secure hereafter our position amongst men.

Such, briefly and imperfectly sketched, was the character of Reginald Glanville—the one, who, of all my early companions differed the most from myself; yet the one whom I loved the most, and the one whose future destiny was the most intertwined with my own.

I was in the head class when I left Eton. As I was reckoned an uncommonly well-educated boy, it may not be ungratifying to the admirers of the present system of education to pause here for a moment, and recal what I then knew. I could make fifty Latin verses in half an hour; I could construe, *without* an English translation, all the easy Latin authors, and many of the difficult ones, *with it*: I could

read Greek fluently, and even translate it through the medium of the Latin version technically called a crib.* I was thought exceedingly clever, for I had been only eight years acquiring all this fund of information, which, as one need never recal it in the world, you have every right to suppose that I had entirely forgotten before I was five-and-twenty. As I was never *taught* a syllable of English during this period; as, when I once attempted to read Pope's poems out of school hours, I was laughed at, and called "*a sap*;" as my mother, when I went to school, renounced her own instructions; and as, whatever schoolmasters may think to the contrary, one learns nothing now-a-days by inspiration: so of everything which relates to English literature, English laws, and English history (with the exception of the said story of Queen Elizabeth and Lord Essex), you have the same right to suppose that I was, at the age of eighteen, when I left Eton, in the profoundest ignorance.

At this age, I was transplanted to Cambridge, where I bloomed for two years in the blue and silver of a fellow commoner of Trinity. At the end of that time (being of royal descent) I became entitled to an *honorary* degree. I suppose the term is in contradistinction to an *honourable* degree, which is obtained by pale men in spectacles and cotton stockings, after thirty-six months of intense application.

I do not exactly remember how I spent my time at Cambridge. I had a piano-forte in my room, and a private

* It is but just to say that the educational system at public schools is greatly improved since the above was written. And take those great seminaries altogether, it may be doubted whether any institutions more philosophical in theory are better adapted to secure that union of classical tastes with manly habits and honourable sentiments which distinguishes the English gentleman.

billiard-room at a village two miles off; and, between these resources, I managed to improve my mind more than could reasonably have been expected. To say truth, the whole place reeked with vulgarity. The men drank beer by the gallon, and ate cheese by the hundred weight—wore jockey-cut coats, and talked slang—rode for wagers, and swore when they lost—smoked in your face, and expectorated on the floor. Their proudest glory was to drive the mail—their mightiest exploit to box with the coachman—their most delicate amour to leer at the barmaid.*

It will be believed, that I felt little regret in quitting companions of this description. I went to take leave of our college tutor. "Mr. Pelham," said he, affectionately squeezing me

by the hand, "your conduct has been most exemplary; you have not walked wantonly over the college grassplots, nor set your dog at the proctor—nor driven tandems by day, nor broken lamps by night—nor entered the chapel in order to display your intoxication—nor the lecture-room, in order to caricature the professors. This is the general behaviour of young men of family, and fortune; but it has not been your's. Sir, you have been an honour to your college."

Thus closed my academical career. He who does not allow that it passed creditably to my teachers, profitably to myself, and beneficially to the world, is a narrow-minded and illiterate man, who knows nothing of the advantages of modern education.

CHAPTER III.

Thus does a false ambition rule us,

Thus pomp delude, and folly fool us.—*SHANSTON.*

An open house, haunted with great resort.—*BISHOP HALL's Satires.*

I LEFT Cambridge in a very weak state of health; and as nobody had yet come to London, I accepted the invitation of Sir Lionel Garrett to pay him a visit at his country seat. Accordingly, one raw winter's day, full of the hopes of the reviving influence of air and exercise, I found myself carefully packed up in three great coats, and on the high road to Garrett Park.

✓ Sir Lionel Garrett was a character very common in England, and, in describing him, I describe the whole species. He was of an ancient family,

* This, at that time, was a character that could only be applied to the gayest, that is the worst, set at the University—and perhaps now the character may scarcely exist.

and his ancestors had for centuries resided on their estates in Norfolk. Sir Lionel, who came to his majority and his fortune at the same time, went up to London at the age of twenty-one, a raw, uncouth sort of young man, with a green coat and lank hair. His friends in town were of that set whose members are *above* *ton*, whenever they do not grasp at its possession, but who, whenever they do, lose at once their aim and their equilibrium, and fall immeasurably below it. I mean that set which I call "*the respectable*," consisting of old peers of an old school; country gentlemen, who still disdain not to love their wine and to hate the French; generals who *have served* in the army; elder brothers who succeed

to something besides a mortgage; and younger brothers who do not mistake their capital for their income. To this set you may add the whole of the baronetage—for I have remarked that baronets hang together like bees or Scotchmen; and if I go to a baronet's house, and speak to some one whom I have not the happiness to know, I always say "*Sir John!*"

It was no wonder, then, that to this set belonged Sir Lionel Garrett—no more the youth with a green coat and lank hair, but pinched in, and curled out—abounding in horses and whiskers—dancing all night—lounging all day—the favourite of the old ladies, the Philander of the young.

One unfortunate evening Sir Lionel Garrett was introduced to the celebrated Duchess of D. From that moment his head was turned. Before then, he had always imagined that he was somebody—that he was Sir Lionel Garrett, with a good looking person and eight thousand a-year; he now knew that he was nobody, unless he went to Lady G.'s, and unless he bowed to Lady S. Disdaining all importance derived from himself, it became absolutely necessary to his happiness, that all his importance should be derived solely from his acquaintance with others. He cared not a straw that he was a man of fortune, of family, of consequence; he must be a man of *ton*; or he was an atom, a nonentity, a very worm, and no man. No lawyer at Gray's Inn, no galley slave at the oar, ever worked so hard at his task as Sir Lionel Garrett at *his*. *Ton*, to a single man, is a thing attainable enough. Sir Lionel was just gaining the envied distinction, when he saw, courted, and married Lady Harriet Woodstock.

His new wife was of a modern and not very rich family, and striving like Sir Lionel for the notoriety of fashion; but of this struggle he was ignorant. He saw her *admitted* into

good society—he imagined she *commanded* it; she was a hanger on—he believed she was a leader. Lady Harriet was crafty and twenty-four—had no objection to be married, nor to change the name of Woodstock for Garrett. She kept up the baronet's mistake till it was too late to repair it.

Marriage did not bring Sir Lionel wisdom. His wife was of the same turn of mind as himself: they might have been great people in the country—they preferred being little people in town. They might *have* chosen *friends* among persons of respectability and rank—they preferred *being* chosen *as acquaintance* by persons of *ton*. Society was their being's end and aim, and the only thing which brought them pleasure was the pain of attaining it. Did I not say truly that I would describe individuals of a common species? Is there one who reads this, who does not recognise that overflowing class of our population, whose members would conceive it an insult to be thought of sufficient rank to be respectable for what they are?—who take it as an honour that they are made by their acquaintance?—who renounce the ease of living for themselves, for the trouble of living for persons who care not a pin for their existence—who are wretched if they are not dictated to by others—and who toil, groan, travail, through the whole course of life, in order to forfeit their independence?

I arrived at Garrett Park just time enough to dress for dinner. As I was descending the stairs after having performed that ceremony, I heard my own name pronounced by a very soft, lisping voice—"Henry Pelham! dear, what a pretty name. Is he handsome?"

"Rather elegant than handsome," was the unsatisfactory reply, couched in a slow, pompous accent, which I immediately recognised to belong to Lady Harriet Garrett.

"Can we make something of him?" resumed the first voice.

"Something!" said Lady Harriet, indignantly; "he will be Lord Glenmorris! and he is son to Lady Frances Pelham."

"Ah," said the lisper, carelessly; "but can he write poetry, and play *proverbs*?"

"No, Lady Harriet," said I, advancing; "but permit me, through you, to assure Lady Nelthorpe that he can admire those who do."

"So you know me then?" said the lisper: "I see we shall be excellent friends;" and, disengaging herself from Lady Harriet, she took my arm, and began discussing persons and things, poetry and china, French plays and music, till I found myself beside her at dinner, and most assiduously endeavouring to silence her by the superior engrossments of a *béchamel* *de poisson*.

I took the opportunity of the pause, to survey the little circle of which Lady Harriet was the centre. In the first place, there was Mr. Davison, a great political economist, a short, dark, corpulent gentleman, with a quiet, serene, sleepy countenance: beside him was a quick, sharp little woman, all sparkle and bustle, glancing a small, grey, prying eye round the table, with a most restless activity: this, as Lady Nelthorpe afterwards informed me, was a Miss Trafford, an excellent person for a Christmas in the country, whom everybody was dying to have: she was an admirable mimic, an admirable actress, and an admirable reciter; made poetry and shoes, and told fortunes by the cards, which *actually came true*!

There was also Mr. Wormwood, the *voli-me-tangere* of literary lions—an author who sowed his conversation not with flowers but thorns. Nobody could accuse him of the flattery generally imputed to his species: through the course of a long and varied life, he

had never once been known to say a civil thing. He was too much disliked not be sought after; whatever is once notorious, even for being disagreeable, is sure to be courted. Opposite to him sat the really clever, and affectedly pedantic Lord Vincent, one of those persons who have been "*promising young men*" all their lives; who are found till four o'clock in the afternoon in a dressing-gown, with a quarto before them; who go down into the country for six weeks every session, to cram an impromptu reply; and who always have a work in the press which is never to be published.

Lady Nelthorpe herself I had frequently seen. She had some reputation for talent, was exceedingly affected, wrote poetry in albums, ridiculed her husband, (who was a fox hunter,) and had a particular taste for the fine arts.

There were four or five others of the unknown vulgar, younger brothers, who were good shots and bad matches; elderly ladies, who lived in Baker-street, and liked long whist; and young ones, who never took wine, and said "*Sir!*"

I must, however, among this number, except the beautiful Lady Roseville, the most fascinating woman, perhaps, of the day. She was evidently the great person there, and, indeed, among all people who paid due deference to *ton*, was always sure to be so everywhere. I have never seen but one person more beautiful. Her eyes were of the deepest blue; her complexion of the most delicate carnation; her hair of the richest auburn: nor could even Mr. Wormwood detect the smallest fault in the rounded yet slender symmetry of her figure.

Although not above twenty-five, she was in that state in which alone a woman ceases to be a dependant—widowhood. Lord Roseville, who had been dead about two years, had not

survived their marriage many months; that period was, however, sufficiently long to allow him to appreciate her excellence, and to testify his sense of it: the whole of his unentailed property, which was very large, he bequeathed to her.

She was very fond of the society of literary persons, though without the pretence of belonging to their order. But her manners constituted her chief attraction: while they were utterly different from those of every one else, you could not, in the least minutiae, discover in what the difference consisted: this is, in my opinion, the real test of perfect breeding. While you are enchanted with the effect, it should possess so little prominence and peculiarity, that you should never be able to guess the cause.

"Pray," said Lord Vincent to Mr. Wormwood, "have you been to P—— this year?"

"No," was the answer.

"I have," said Miss Trafford, who never lost an opportunity of slipping in a word.

"Well, and did they make you sleep, as usual, at the Crown, with the same eternal excuse, after having brought you fifty miles from town, of small house—no beds—all engaged—inn close by? Ah, never shall I forget that inn, with its royal name, and its hard beds—

'Uneasy sleeps a head beneath the Crown!'

"Ha, ha! Excellent!" cried Miss Trafford, who was always the first in at the death of a pun. "Yes, indeed they did: poor old Lord Belton, with his rheumatism; and that immense General Grant, with his asthma; together with three 'single men,' and myself, were safely conveyed to that asylum for the destitute."

"Ah! Grant, Grant!" said Lord Vincent, eagerly, who saw another

opportunity of whipping in a pun. "He slept there also the same night I did; and when I saw his unwieldy person waddling out of the door the next morning, I said to Temple, 'Well, *that's the largest Grant I ever saw from the Crown.*'"*

"Very good," said Wormwood, gravely. "I declare, Vincent, you are growing *quite* witty. You know Jekyl, of course? Poor fellow, what a really good punster *he was*—not agreeable though—particularly at dinner—no punsters are. Mr. Davison, what is that dish next to you?"

Mr. Davison was a great gourmand: "*Salmi de perdreaux aux truffes*," replied the political economist.

"Truffles!" said Wormwood, "have *you* been eating any?"

"Yes," said Davison, with unusual energy, "and they are the best I have tasted for a long time."

"Very likely," said Wormwood, with a dejected air. "I am particularly fond of them, but I dare not touch one—truffles are so *very* apoplectic—you, I make no doubt, may eat them in safety."

Wormwood was a tall, meagre man, with a neck a yard long. Davison was, as I have said, short and fat, and made without any apparent neck at all—only head and shoulders, like a eel fish.

Poor Mr. Davison turned perfectly white; he fidgeted about in his chair; cast a look of the most deadly fear and aversion at the fatal dish he had been so attentive to before; and, muttering "apoplectic!" closed his lips, and did not open them again all dinner-time.

Mr. Wormwood's object was effected. Two people were silenced and uncomfortable, and a sort of mist hung over the spirits of the whole party. The dinner went on and off, like all other

* It was from Mr. J. Smith that Lord Vincent purloined this pun.

dinners; the ladies retired, and the men drank, and talked politics. Mr. Davison left the room first, in order to look out the word "truffle," in the Encyclopædia; and Lord Vincent and I went next, "lest (as my companion characteristically observed) that d—d Wormwood should, if we stayed a moment longer, 'send us weeping to our beds.'"

CHAPTER IV.

Oh ! la belle chose que la Poste ! *—*Lettres de Sévigne.*

Ay—but who is it ?—*As you like it.*

I HAD mentioned to my mother my intended visit to Garrett Park, and the second day after my arrival there came the following letter :—

"MY DEAR HENRY,

"I was very glad to hear you were rather better than you had been. I trust you will take great care of yourself. I think flannel waistcoats might be advisable; and, by-the-by, they are very good for the complexion. Apropos of the complexion: I did not like that blue coat you wore when I last saw you—you look best in black—which is a great compliment, for people must be very distinguished in appearance, in order to do so.

"You know, my dear, that those Garretts are in themselves anything but unexceptionable; you will, therefore, take care not to be *too* intimate; it is, however, a very good house: most whom you meet there are worth knowing, for one thing or the other. Remember, Henry, that the acquaintance (*not* the friends) of second or third-rate people are always sure to be good: they are not independent enough to receive whom they like—their whole rank is in their guests: you may be also sure that the *ménage* will, in outward appearance at least, be quite *comme il faut*, and for the same

reason. Gain as much knowledge *de l'art culinaire* as you can: it is an accomplishment absolutely necessary. You may also pick up a little acquaintance with metaphysics, if you have any opportunity; that sort of thing is a good deal talked about just at present.

"I hear Lady Roseville is at Garrett Park. You must be particularly attentive to her; you will probably now have an opportunity *de faire votre cour* that may never again happen. In London, she is so much surrounded by all, that she is quite inaccessible to one; besides, there you will have so many rivals. Without flattery to you, I take it for granted, that you are the best looking and most agreeable person at Garrett Park, and it will, therefore, be a most unpardonable fault if you do not make Lady Roseville of the same opinion. Nothing, my dear son, is like a *liaison* (quite innocent of course) with a woman of celebrity in the world. In marriage a man lowers a woman to his own rank; in an *affaire de cœur* he raises himself to her's. I need not, I am sure, after what I have said, press this point any further.

"Write to me and inform me of all your proceedings. If you mention the people who are at Garrett Park, I can tell you the proper line of conduct to pursue with each.

"I am sure that I need not add that I have nothing but your real

* Oh ! what a beautiful thing is — the Post-office.

good at heart, and that I am your very affectionate mother,

“FRANCES PELHAM.

“P.S. Never talk much to young men—remember that it is the women who make a reputation in society.”

“Well,” said I, when I had read this letter, “my mother is very right, and so now for Lady Roseville.”

I went down stairs to breakfast. Miss Trafford and Lady Nelthorpe were in the room, talking with great interest, and, on Miss Trafford’s part, with still greater vehemence.

“So handsome,” said Lady Nelthorpe, as I approached.

“Are you talking of me?” said I.

“Oh, you vanity of vanities!” was the answer. “No, we were speaking of a very romantic adventure which has happened to Miss Trafford and myself, and disputing about the hero of it. Miss Trafford declares he is frightful; I say that he is beautiful. Now, you know, Mr. Pelham, as to *you*——”

“There can be but one opinion;—but the adventure?”

“Is this!” cried Miss Trafford, in great fright, lest Lady Nelthorpe should, by speaking first, have the pleasure of the narration.—“We were walking, two or three days ago, by the sea-side, picking up shells and talking about the ‘Corsair,’ when a large fierce——”

“Man!” interrupted I.

“No, *dog*,” (renewed Miss Trafford, “flew suddenly out of a cave, under a rock, and began growling at dear Lady Nelthorpe and me, in the most savage manner imaginable. He would certainly have torn us to pieces if a very tall——”

“Not so very tall either,” said Lady Nelthorpe.

“Dear, how you interrupt one,” said Miss Trafford, pettishly; “well,

a very short man, then, wrapped up in a cloak——”

“In a great-coat,” drawled Lady Nelthorpe. Miss Trafford went on without noticing the emendation,—“had not, with incredible rapidity, sprung down the rock and——”

“Called him off,” said Lady Nelthorpe.

“Yes, called him off,” pursued Miss Trafford, looking round for the necessary symptoms of our wonder at this very extraordinary incident.

“What is the most remarkable,” said Lady Nelthorpe, “is, that though he seemed from his dress and appearance to be really a gentleman, he never stayed to ask if we were alarmed or hurt—scarcely even looked at us——”

“(I don’t wonder at *that*!” said Mr. Wormwood, who, with Lord Vincent, had just entered the room;)

“—and vanished among the rocks as suddenly as he appeared.”

“Oh, you’ve seen that fellow, have you?” said Lord Vincent: “so have I, and a devilish queer-looking person he is,—

‘The balls of his broad eyes roll’d in his head,
And glar’d betwixt a yellow and a red;
He looked a lion with a gloomy stare,
And o’er his eyebrows hung his matted hair.

Well remembered, and better applied—eh, Mr. Pelham?”

“Really,” said I, “I am not able to judge of the application, since I have not seen the hero.”

“Oh! it’s admirable,” said Miss Trafford, “just the description I should have given of him in prose. But pray, where, when, and how did you see him?”

“Your question is religiously mysterious, *tria juncta in uno*,” replied Vincent; “but I will answer it with the simplicity of a Quaker. The other evening I was coming home from one of Sir Lionel’s preserves,

and had sent the keeper on before, in order more undisturbedly to——”

“Con witticisms for dinner,” said Wormwood.

“To make out the meaning of Mr. Wormwood’s last work,” continued Lord Vincent. “My shortest way lay through that churchyard about a mile hence, which is such a lion in this ugly part of the country, because it has three thistles and a tree. Just as I got there, I saw a man suddenly rise from the earth, where he appeared to have been lying; he stood still for a moment, and then (evidently not perceiving me) raised his clasped hands to heaven, and muttered some words I was not able distinctly to hear. As I approached nearer to him, which I did with no very pleasant sensations, a large black dog, which, till then, had remained *couchant*, sprang towards me with a loud growl,

‘Sonat hic de nare canina
Litera,’

as Persius has it. I was too terrified to move—

‘Obstupui—steteruntque comæ—’

and I should most infallibly have been converted into dog’s meat, if our mutual acquaintance had not started

from his reverie, called his dog by the very appropriate name of Terror, and then, slouching his hat over his face, passed rapidly by me, dog and all. I did not recover the fright for an hour and a quarter. I walked—ye gods, how I *did* walk!—no wonder, by the by, that I *mended* my pace, for, as Pliny says truly—

“‘Timor est emendator asperimus.’” *

Mr. Wormwood had been very impatient during this recital, preparing an attack upon Lord Vincent, when Mr. Davison, entering suddenly, diverted the assault.

“Good heavens!” said Wormwood, dropping his roll, “how very ill you look to-day, Mr. Davison; face flushed—veins swelled—oh, those horrid truffles! Miss Trafford, I’ll trouble you for the salt.”

* Most of the quotations from Latin or French authors, interspersed throughout this work, will be translated for the convenience of the general reader; but exceptions will be made, where such quotations (as is sometimes the case when from the mouth of Lord Vincent) merely contain a play upon words, which are pointless, out of the language employed, or which only iterate or illustrate, by a characteristic pedantry, the sentence that precedes or follows them.

CHAPTER V.

Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flowery meads in May;
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?

GEORGE WITHER.

—— It was great pity, so it was,
That villainous saltpetre should be digged
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroyed.

First Part of King Henry IV.

SEVERAL days passed. I had taken particular pains to ingratiate myself with Lady Roseville, and, so far as common acquaintance went, I had no reason to be dissatisfied with my success. Anything else, I soon discovered, notwithstanding my vanity, (which made no inconsiderable part in the composition of Henry Pelham) was quite out of the question. Her mind was wholly of a different mould from my own. She was like a being, not perhaps of a better, but of another world than myself: we had not one thought or opinion in common; we looked upon things with a totally different vision; I was soon convinced that she was of a nature exactly contrary to what was generally believed—she was anything but the mere mechanical woman of the world. She possessed great sensibility, and even romance of temper, strong passions, and still stronger imagination; but over all these deeper recesses of her character, the extreme softness and languor of her manners threw a veil which no superficial observer could penetrate. There were times when I could believe that she was inwardly restless and unhappy; but she was too well versed in the arts of concealment, to suffer such an appearance to be more than momentary

I must own that I consoled myself very easily for my want, in this particular instance, of that usual good fortune which attends me with the divine sex; the fact was, that I had another object in pursuit. All the men at Sir Lionel Garrett's were keen sportsmen. Now, shooting is an amusement I was never particularly partial to. I was first disgusted with that species of rational recreation at a *battue*, where, instead of bagging anything, *I was nearly bagged*, having been inserted, like wine in an ice pail, in a wet ditch for three hours, during which time my hat had been twice shot at for a pheasant, and my leather gaiters once for a hare; and to crown all, when these several mistakes were discovered, my intended exterminators, instead of apologising for having shot at me, were quite disappointed at having missed.

Seriously, that same shooting is a most barbarous amusement, only fit for majors in the army, and royal dukes, and that sort of people; *the mere walking* is bad enough, but embarrassing one's arms, moreover, with a gun, and one's legs with turnip tops, exposing oneself to the mercy of bad shots and the atrocity of good, seems to me only a state of painful fatigue, enlivened by the probability of being killed.

This digression is meant to signify, that I never joined the single men and double Mantons that went in and off among Sir Lionel Garrett's preserves. I used, instead, to take long walks by myself, and found, like virtue, my own reward, in the additional health and strength these diurnal exertions produced me.

One morning, chance threw into my way a *bonne fortune*, which I took care to improve. From that time the family of a Farmer Sinclair (one of Sir Lionel's tenants) was alarmed by strange and supernatural noises: one apartment in especial, occupied by a female member of the household, was allowed, even by the clerk of the parish, a very bold man, and a bit of a sceptic, to be haunted; the windows of that chamber were wont to open and shut, thin airy voices confabulate therein, and dark shapes hover *thereout*, long after the fair occupant had, with the rest of the family, retired to repose. But the most

unaccountable thing was the fatality which attended *me*, and seemed to mark me out for an untimely death. I, who had so carefully kept out of the way of gunpowder as a sportsman, very narrowly escaped being twice shot as a ghost. This was but a poor reward for a walk more than a mile long, in nights by no means of cloudless climes and starry skies; accordingly I resolved to "give up the ghost" in earnest rather than in metaphor, and to pay my last visit and adieus to the mansion of Farmer Sinclair. The night on which I executed this resolve was rather memorable in my future history.

The rain had fallen so heavily during the day, as to render the road to the house almost impassable, and when it was time to leave, I inquired with very considerable emotion, whether there was not an easier way to return. The answer was satisfactory, and my last nocturnal visit at Farmer Sinclair's concluded.

CHAPTER VI.

Why sleeps he not, when others are at rest?—BYRON.

ACCORDING to the explanation I had received, the road I was now to pursue was somewhat longer, but much better, than that which I generally took. It was to lead me home through the churchyard of —, the same, by the way, which Lord Vincent had particularised in his anecdote of the mysterious stranger. The night was clear, but windy: there were a few light clouds passing rapidly over the moon, which was at her full, and shone through the frosty air, with all that cold and transparent brightness so peculiar to our northern winters. I walked briskly on till I came to the churchyard; I could not then help pausing (notwithstanding my total

deficiency in all romance) to look for a few moments at the exceeding beauty of the scene around me. The church itself was extremely old, and stood alone and grey, in the rude simplicity of the earliest form of gothic architecture: two large dark yew-trees drooped on each side over tombs, which, from their size and decorations, appeared to be the last possession of some quondam lords of the soil. To the left, the ground was skirted by a thick and luxuriant copse of evergreens, in the front of which stood one tall, naked oak, stern and leafless, a very token of desolation and decay; there were but few grave stones scattered about, and these were, for the most part,

hidden by the long wild grass which wreathed and climbed round them. Over all, the blue skies and still moon shed that solemn light, the effect of which, either on the scene or the feelings, it is so impossible to describe.

I was just about to renew my walk, when a tall, dark figure, wrapped up like myself, in a large French cloak, passed slowly along from the other side of the church, and paused by the copse I have before mentioned. I was shrouded at that moment from his sight by one of the yew trees ; he stood still only for a few moments ; he then flung himself upon the earth, and sobbed, audibly, even at the spot where I was standing. I was in doubt whether to wait longer or to proceed ; my way lay just by him, and it might be dangerous to interrupt so substantial an apparition. However, my curiosity was excited, and my feet were half frozen, two cogent reasons for proceeding ; and, to say truth, I was never very much frightened by any thing dead or alive.

Accordingly I left my obscurity, and walked slowly onwards. I had not got above three paces before the figure arose, and stood erect and motionless before me. His hat had fallen off, and the moon shone full upon his countenance ; it was not the wild expression of intense anguish which dwelt on those hueless and sunken features, nor their quick change to ferocity and defiance, as his eye fell upon me, which made me start back and feel my heart stand still ! Notwithstanding the fearful ravages graven in that countenance, once so brilliant with the graces of boyhood, I recognised, at one glance, those still noble and striking features. It was Reginald Glanville who stood before me ! I recovered myself instantly ; I

threw myself towards him, and called him by his name. He turned hastily ; but I would not suffer him to escape ; I put my hand upon his arm, and drew him towards me. "Glanville !" I exclaimed, "it is I ! it is your old—old friend, Henry Pelham. Good Heavens ! have I met you at last, and in such a scene ?"

Glanville shook me from him in an instant, covered his face with his hands, and sank down with one wild cry, which went fearfully through that still place, upon the spot from which he had but just risen. I knelt beside him ; I took his hand ; I spoke to him in every endearing term that I could think of ; and, roused and excited as my feelings were, by so strange and sudden a meeting, I felt my tears involuntarily falling over the hand which I held in my own. Glanville turned ; he looked at me for one moment, as if fully to recognise me ; and then throwing himself in my arms, wept like a child.

It was but for a few minutes that this weakness lasted ; he rose suddenly—the whole expression of his countenance was changed—the tears still rolled in large drops down his cheeks, but the proud, stern character which the features had assumed, seemed to deny the feelings which that feminine weakness had betrayed.

"Pelham," he said, "*you* have seen me thus ; I had hoped that no living eye would—this is the last time in which I shall indulge this folly. God bless you—we shall meet again—and this night shall then seem to you like a dream."

I would have answered, but he turned swiftly, passed in one moment through the copse, and in the next had disappeared.

CHAPTER VII.

You reach a chilling chamber, where you dread
Damps.—CRABBE'S *Borough*.

I COULD not sleep the whole of that night, and the next morning I set off early, with the resolution of discovering where Glanville had taken up his abode; it was evident from his having been so frequently seen, that it must be in the immediate neighbourhood.

I went first to Farmer Sinclair's; they had often remarked him, but could give me no other information. I then proceeded towards the coast; there was a small public-house belonging to Sir Lionel close by the sea shore; never had I seen a more bleak and dreary prospect than that which stretched for miles around this miserable cabin. How an innkeeper could live there, is a mystery to me at this day—I should have imagined it a spot upon which anything but a sea-gull or a Scotchman would have starved.

"Just the sort of place, however," thought I, "to hear something of Glanville." I went into the house; I inquired, and heard that a strange gentleman *had* been lodging for the last two or three weeks at a cottage about a mile further up the coast. Thither I bent my steps; and after having met two crows, and one officer on the preventive service, I arrived safely at my new destination.

It was a house a little better, in outward appearance, than the wretched hut I had just left, for I observe in all situations, and in *all* houses, that "the public" is not too well served; but the situation was equally lonely and desolate. The house itself, which belonged to an individual, half-fisherman and half-smuggler, stood in a sort of bay,

between two tall, rugged, black cliffs. Before the door hung various nets to dry beneath the genial warmth of a winter's sun; and a broken boat, with its keel uppermost, furnished an admirable habitation for a hen and her family, who appeared to receive *en pension* an old clerico-bachelor-looking raven. I cast a suspicious glance at the last-mentioned personage, which hopped towards me with a very hostile appearance, and entered the threshold with a more rapid step, in consequence of sundry apprehensions of a premeditated assault.

"I understand," said I, to an old, dried, brown female, who looked like a resuscitated red-herring, "that a gentleman is lodging here."

"No, sir," was the answer: "he left us this morning."

The reply came upon me like a shower bath; I was both chilled and stunned by so unexpected a shock. The old woman, on my renewing my inquiries, took me up stairs, to a small, wretched room, to which the damps literally clung. In one corner was a flock-bed, still unmade, and opposite to it, a three-legged stool, a chair, and an antique carved oak table, a donation perhaps from some squire in the neighbourhood; on this last were scattered fragments of writing paper, a cracked cup half full of ink, a pen, and a broken ramrod. As I mechanically took up the latter, the woman said, in a charming *patois*, which I shall translate, since I cannot do justice to the original:—"The gentleman, sir, said he came here for a few weeks to shoot; he brought a gun, a

large dog, and a small portmanteau. He stayed nearly a month; he used to spend all the mornings in the fens, though he must have been but a poor shot, for he seldom brought home anything; and we fear, sir, that he was rather out of his mind, for he used to go out alone at night, and stay sometimes till morning. However, he was quite quiet, and behaved *to us* like a gentleman; so it was no business of ours, only my husband does think—

"Pray," interrupted I, "why did he leave you so suddenly?"

"Lord, sir, I don't know! but he told us for several days past that he should not stay over the week, and so we were not surprised when he left us this morning at seven o'clock. Poor gentleman, my heart bled for him when I saw him look so pale and ill."

And here I *did* see the good woman's eyes fill with tears: but she wiped them away, and took advantage of the additional persuasion they gave to her natural whine to say, "If, sir, you know of any young gentleman who likes fen-shooting, and wants a nice, pretty, quiet apartment—"

"I will certainly recommend this," said I.

"You see it at present," rejoined *the landlady*, "quite in a litter like; but it is really a sweet place in summer."

"Charming," said I, with a cold shiver, hurrying down the stairs, with a pain in my ear, and the rheumatism in my shoulder.

"And this," thought I, "was Glanville's residence for nearly a month! I wonder he did not exhale into a vapour, or moisten into a green damp."

I went home by the churchyard. I paused on the spot where I had last seen him. A small grave-stone rose

above the mound of earth on which he had thrown himself; it was perfectly simple. The date of the year and month (which showed that many weeks had not elapsed since the death of the deceased) and the initials G. D., made the sole inscription on the stone. Beside this tomb was one of a more pompous description, to the memory of a Mrs. Douglas, which had with the simple tumulus nothing in common, unless the initial letter of the surname, corresponding with the latter initial on the neighbouring gravestone, might authorise any connection between them, not supported by that similitude of style usually found in the cenotaphs of the same family: the one, indeed, might have covered the grave of a humble villager—the other, the resting-place of the lady of the manor.

I found, therefore, no clue for the labyrinth of surmise; and I went home, more vexed and disappointed with my day's expedition than I liked to acknowledge to myself.

Lord Vincent met me in the hall. "Delighted to see you," said he; "I have just been to — (the nearest town), in order to discover what sort of savages abide there. Great preparations for a ball—all the tallow candles in the town are bespoken—and I heard a most uncivilised fiddle,

'Twang short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.'

The one milliner's shop was full of fat squires, buying muslin ammunition, to make the *ball go off*; and the attics, even at four o'clock, were thronged with rubicund damsels, who were already, as Shakspeare says of waves in a storm,

'Curling their monstrous heads.'

CHAPTER VIII.

Jusqu'au revoir le ciel vous tienne tous en joie.*—MOLIERE.

I WAS NOW pretty well tired of Garrett Park. Lady Roseville was going to H——, where I also had an invitation. Lord Vincent meditated an excursion to Paris. Mr. Davison had already departed. Miss Trafford had been gone, God knows how long, and I was not at all disposed to be left, like “the last rose of summer,” in single blessedness at Garrett Park. Vincent, Wormwood, and myself, all agreed to leave on the same day.

The morning of our departure arrived. We sat down to breakfast as usual. Lord Vincent's carriage was at the door; his groom was walking about his favourite saddle horse.

“A beautiful *mare* that is of your's,” said I, carelessly looking at it, and reaching across the table to help myself to the *pâté de foie gras*.

“*Mare!*” exclaimed the incorrigible punster, delighted with my mistake: “I thought that you would have been better acquainted with your *propria quæ maribus*.”

“Humph!” said Wormwood, “when I look at you I am always at least reminded of the ‘*as in præsent!*’”

Lord Vincent drew up and looked unutterable anger. Wormwood went on with his dry toast, and Lady Roseville, who that morning had, for a wonder, come down to breakfast, good-naturedly took off the bear. Whether or not his ascetic nature was somewhat modified by the soft smiles and softer voice of the beautiful countess, I cannot pretend to say; but he cer-

tainly entered into a conversation with her, not much rougher than that of a less gifted individual might have been. They talked of literature, Lord Byron, conversaziones, and Lydia White.*

“Miss White,” said Lady Roseville, “has not only the best command of language herself, but she gives language to other people. Dinner parties, usually so stupid, are, at her house, quite delightful. There, I have actually seen English people look happy, and one or two even almost natural.”

“Ah!” said Wormwood, “that is indeed rare. With us everything is assumption. We are still exactly like the English suitor to Portia, in the Merchant of Venice. We take our doublet from one country, our hose from another, and our behaviour everywhere. Fashion with us is like the man in one of Le Sage's novels, who was constantly changing his servants, and yet had but one suit of livery, which every new comer, whether he was tall or short, fat or thin, was obliged to wear. We adopt manners, however incongruous and ill suited to our nature, and thus we always seem awkward and constrained. But Lydia White's *soirées* are indeed agreeable. I remember the last time I dined there, we were six in number, and though we were not blessed with the company of Lord Vincent, the conversation was without ‘let or flaw.’ Every one, even S——, said good things.”

“Indeed!” cried Lord Vincent, “and pray, Mr. Wormwood, what did you say?”

* Heaven keep you merry till we meet again.

* Written before the death of that lady.

"Why," answered the poet, glancing with a significant sneer over Vincent's somewhat inelegant person, "I thought of your lordship's figure, and said—*grace!*"

"Hem—hem!—'Gratia *malorum tam infida est quam ipsi*,' as Pliny says," muttered Lord Vincent, getting up hastily, and buttoning his coat.

I took the opportunity of the ensuing pause to approach Lady Roseville, and whisper my adieus. She was kind and even warm to me in returning them; and pressed me, with something marvellously like sincerity, to be sure to come and see her directly she returned to London. I soon discharged the duties of my remaining farewells, and in less than half an hour, was more than a mile distant from Garrett Park and its inhabitants. I can't say that for one, who, like myself, is fond of being made a great deal of, there is anything very delightful in those visits into the country. It may be all well enough for married people, who, from the mere fact of *being* married, are always entitled to certain consideration, put—for instance—into a bed-room, a little larger than a dog-kennel, and accommodated with a looking-glass,

that does not distort one's features like a paralytic stroke. But we single men suffer a plurality of evils and hardships, in intrusting ourselves to the casualties of rural hospitality. We are thrust up into any attic repository—exposed to the mercy of rats, and the incursions of swallows. Our lavations are performed in a cracked basin, and we are so far removed from human assistance that our very bells sink into silence before they reach half way down the stairs. But two days before I left Garrett Park, I myself saw an enormous mouse run away with my shaving soap, without any possible means of resisting the aggression. Oh! the hardships of a single man are beyond conception; and what is worse, the very misfortune of being single deprives one of all sympathy. "A single man can do this, and a single man ought to do that, and a single man may be put here, and a single man may be sent there," are maxims that I have been in the habit of hearing constantly inculcated and never disputed during my whole life; and so, from our fare and treatment being coarse in all matters, they have at last grown to be all matters in course.

CHAPTER IX.

Therefore to France.—*Henry IV.*

I WAS rejoiced to find myself again in London. I went to my father's house in Grosvenor-square. All the family, viz., he and my mother, were down at H——; and despite my aversion to the country, I thought I might venture as far as Lady——'s for a couple of days. Accordingly, to H—— I went. That is really a noble house—such a hall—such a gallery! I found my mother in the drawing-room, admiring the picture of his late Majesty. She was leaning on the arm of a tall, fair young man. "Henry," said she (introducing me to him), "do you remember your old school-fellow, Lord George Clinton?"

"Perfectly," said I (though I remembered nothing about him), and we shook hands in the most cordial manner imaginable. By the way, there is no greater bore than being called upon to recollect men, with whom one had been at school some ten years back. In the first place, if they were not in one's own set, one most likely scarcely knew them to speak to; and, in the second place, if they *were* in one's own set, they are sure to be entirely opposite to the nature we have since acquired: for I scarcely ever knew an instance of the companions of one's boyhood being agreeable to the tastes of one's manhood:—a strong proof of the folly of people, who send their sons to Eton and Harrow to *form connections!*

Clinton was on the eve of setting out upon his travels. His intention was to stay a year at Paris, and he was full of the blissful expectations the idea of that city had conjured up. We remained together all the evening, and took a prodigious fancy to one another.

Long before I went to bed, he had perfectly inoculated me with his own ardour for continental adventures; and, indeed, I had half promised to accompany him. My mother, when I first told her of my travelling intentions, was in despair, but by degrees she grew reconciled to the idea.

"Your health will improve by a purer air," said she, "and your pronunciation of French is, at present, anything but correct. Take care of yourself, therefore, my dear son, and pray lose no time in engaging Coulon as your *maitre de danse*."

My father gave me his blessing, and a cheque on his banker. Within three days I had arranged every thing with Clinton, and, on the fourth, I returned with him to London. Thence we set off to Dover—embarked—dined, for the first time in our lives, on French ground—were astonished to find so little difference between the two countries, and still more so at hearing even the little children talk French so well*—proceeded to Abbeville—there poor Clinton fell ill: for several days we were delayed in that abominable town, and then Clinton, by the advice of the doctors, returned to England. I went back with him as far as Dover, and then, impatient at my loss of time, took no rest, night or day, till I found myself at Paris.

Young, well-born, tolerably good-looking, and never utterly destitute of money, nor grudging whatever enjoyment it could procure, I entered Paris with the ability and the resolution to make the best of those *beaux jours* which so rapidly glide from our possession.

* See Addison's Travels for this idea.

CHAPTER X.

Seest thou how gayly my young maister goes?—BISHOP HALL's *Satires*.

Qui vit sans folie, n'est pas si sage qu'il croit.*—LA ROCHEFOUCAULT.

I LOST no time in presenting my letters of introduction, and they were as quickly acknowledged by invitations to balls and dinners. Paris was full to excess, and of a better description of English than those who usually overflow that reservoir of the world. My first engagement was to dine with Lord and Lady Bennington, who were among the very few English intimate in the best French houses.

On entering Paris I had resolved to set up "*a character*;" for I was always of an ambitious nature, and desirous of being distinguished from the ordinary herd. After various cogitations as to the particular one I should assume, I thought nothing appeared more likely to be obnoxious to men, and therefore pleasing to women, than an egregious coxcomb: accordingly, I arranged my hair into ringlets, dressed myself with singular plainness and simplicity (a low person, by the by, would have done just the contrary), and, putting on an air of exceeding languor, made my maiden appearance at Lord Bennington's. The party was small, and equally divided between French and English: the former had been all emigrants, and the conversation was chiefly in our own tongue.

I was placed, at dinner, next to Miss Paulding, an elderly young lady, of some notoriety at Paris, very clever, very talkative, and very conceited. A young, pale, ill-natured looking man,

sat on her left hand; this was Mr. Aberton.

"Dear me!" said Miss Paulding, "what a pretty chain that is of your's, Mr. Aberton."

"Yes," said Mr. Aberton, "I know it must be pretty, for I got it at Breguet's, with the watch." (How common people always buy their opinions with their goods, and regulate the height of the former by the mere price or fashion of the latter!)

"Pray, Mr. Pelham," said Miss Paulding, turning to me, "have you got one of Breguet's watches yet?"

"Watch!" said I: "*do* you think I could ever wear a watch? I know nothing so plebeian. What can any one, but a man of business, who has nine hours for his counting-house and one for his dinner, ever possibly want to know the time for? 'An assignation,' you will say: true, but—
if a man is worth having, he is surely worth waiting for!"

Miss Paulding opened her eyes, and Mr. Aberton his mouth. A pretty lively French woman opposite (Madame d'Anville) laughed, and immediately joined in our conversation, which, on my part, was, during the whole dinner, kept up exactly in the same strain.

Madame d'Anville was delighted, and Miss Paulding astonished. Mr. Aberton muttered to a fat, foolish Lord Luscombe, "What a damnation puppy!"—and every one, even to old Madame de G——s, seemed to consider me impertinent enough to become the rage!

* *Who lives without folly is not so wise as he thinks.*

As for me, I was perfectly satisfied with the effect I had produced, and I went away the first, in order to give the men an opportunity of abusing me; for whenever the men abuse, the women, to support alike their coquetry and the conversation, think themselves called upon to defend.

The next day I rode into the Champs Elysées. I always valued myself particularly upon my riding, and my horse was both the most fiery and the most beautiful in Paris. The first person I saw was Madame d'Anville. At that moment I was reining in my horse, and conscious, as the wind waved my long curls, that I was looking to the very best advantage; I made my horse bound towards her carriage, (which she immediately stopped,) and made at once my salutations and my court.

"I am going," said she, "to the Duchesse D——'s this evening—it is her night—do come."

"I don't know her," said I.

"Tell me your hotel, and I'll send

you an invitation before dinner," rejoined Madame d'Anville.

"I lodge," said I, "at the Hôtel de —, Rue de Rivoli, on the second floor at present; next year, I suppose, according to the usual gradations in the life of a *garçon*, I shall be on the third: for here the purse and the person seem to be playing at see-saw—the latter rises as the former descends."

We went on conversing for about a quarter of an hour, in which I endeavoured to make the pretty Frenchwoman believe that all the good opinion I possessed of myself the day before, I had that morning entirely transferred to her account.

As I rode home I met Mr. Aberton, with three or four other men; with that glaring good-breeding, so peculiar to the English, he instantly directed their eyes towards me in one mingled and concentrated stare. "*N'importe*," thought I, "they must be devilish clever fellows if they can find a single fault either in my horse or myself."

CHAPTER XI.

Lud! what a group the motley scene discloses,
False wits, false wives, false virgins, and false spouses.

GOLDSMITH'S *Epilogue to the Comedy of the Sisters*.

MADAME D'ANVILLE kept her promise—the invitation was duly sent, and accordingly, at half past ten, to the Rue d'Anjou I drove.

The rooms were already full. Lord Bennington was standing by the door, and close by him, looking exceedingly *distrain*, was my old friend Lord Vincent. They both came towards me at the same moment. "Strive not," thought I, looking at the stately demeanour of the one, and the humorous expression of countenance in the other—"strive not, Tragedy nor Comedy, to engross a Garrick." I spoke first

to Lord Bennington, for I knew he would be the sooner despatched, and then for the next quarter of an hour found myself overflowed with all the witticisms poor Lord Vincent had for days been obliged to retain. I made an engagement to dine with him at Véry's the next day, and then glided off towards Madame D'Anville.

She was surrounded with men, and talking to each with that vivacity which, in a Frenchwoman, is so graceful, and in an Englishwoman would be so vulgar. Though her eyes were not directed towards me, she saw me

approach by that instinctive perception which all coquettes possess, and suddenly altering her seat, made way for me beside her. I did not lose so favourable an opportunity of gaining her good graces, and losing those of all the male animals around her. I sank down on the vacant chair and contrived, with the most unabashed effrontery, and yet, with the most consummate dexterity, to make everything that I said pleasing to her, revolting to some one of her attendants. Wormwood himself could not have succeeded better. One by one they dropped off, and we were left alone among the crowd. Then, indeed, I changed the whole tone of my conversation. Sentiment succeeded to satire, and the pretence of feeling to that of affectation. In short, I was so resolved to please that I could scarcely fail to succeed.

In this main object of the evening I was not however solely employed. I should have been very undeserving of that character for observation which I flatter myself I peculiarly deserve, if I had not, during the three hours I stayed at Madame D——'s, conned over every person remarkable for any thing, from rank to a riband. The Duchesse herself was a fair, pretty, clever woman, with manners rather English than French. She was leaning, at the time I paid my respects to her, on the arm of an Italian count, tolerably well known at Paris. Poor O——i! I hear he is since married. He did not deserve so heavy a calamity!

Sir Henry Millington was close by her, carefully packed up in his coat

and waistcoat. Certainly, that man is the best padder in Europe.

"Come and sit by me, Millington," cried old Lady Oldtown; "I have a good story to tell you of the Duc de ———."

Sir Henry, with difficulty, turned round his magnificent head, and muttered out some unintelligible excuse. The fact was, that poor Sir Henry was not that evening *made* to sit down—he had only his *standing up coat* on! Lady Oldtown—heaven knows—is easily consoled. She supplied the place of the baronet with a most superbly mustachioed German.

"Who," said I, to Madame d'Anville, "are those pretty girls in white, talking with such eagerness to Mr. Aberton and Lord Lascombe?"

"What!" said the Frenchwoman, "have you been ten days in Paris and not been introduced to the Miss Carltons? Let me tell you that your reputation among your countrymen at Paris depends solely upon their verdict."

"And upon your favour," added I.

"Ah;" said she, "you *must* have had your origin in France; you have something about you almost *Parisian*."

"Pray," said I, (after having duly acknowledged this compliment, the very highest that a Frenchwoman can bestow,) "what did you really and candidly think of our countrymen during your residence in England?"

"I will tell you," answered Madame d'Anville; "they are brave, honest, generous, *mais ils sont demi-barbares!*" *

* But they are half-barbarians.

CHAPTER XII.

— Pia mater
Plus quam se sapere, et virtutibus esse priorem
Vult, et ait prope vera.*—HOR. SAT.

— Vere (y) mihi festus atras
 Eximet curas.—HOR. OR.

THE next morning I received a letter from my mother. "My dear Henry," began my affectionate and incomparable parent—

"MY DEAR HENRY,

"You have now fairly entered the world, and though at your age my advice may be but little followed, my experience cannot altogether be useless. I shall, therefore, make no apology for a few precepts, which I trust may tend to make you a wiser and a better man.

"I hope, in the first place, that you have left your letter at the ambassador's, and that you will not fail to go there as often as possible. Pay your court in particular to Lady ——. She is a charming person, universally popular, and one of the very few English people to whom one may safely be civil. Apropos of English civility, you have, I hope, by this time discovered that you have to assume a very different manner with French people from that with our own countrymen: with us, the least appearance of feeling or enthusiasm is certain to be ridiculed everywhere; but in France, you may venture to seem not quite devoid of all natural sentiments: indeed, if you affect enthusiasm, they will give you credit

for genius, and they will place all the qualities of the heart to the account of the head. You know that in England, if you seem desirous of a person's acquaintance, you are sure to lose it; they imagine you have some design upon their wives or their dinners; but in France you can never lose by politeness: nobody will call your civility forwardness and pushing. If the Princesse de T—, and the Duchesse de D—, ask you to their houses (which indeed they will, directly you have left your letters), go there two or three times a week, if only for a few minutes in the evening. It is very hard to be *acquainted* with great French people, but *when* you are, it is your own fault if you are not *intimate* with them.

"Most English people have a kind of diffidence and scruple at calling in the evening—this is perfectly misplaced: the French are never ashamed of themselves, like us, whose persons, families, and houses are never fit to be seen, unless they are dressed out for a party.

"Don't imagine that the ease of French manners is at all like what *we* call ease: you must not lounge on your chair—nor put your feet upon a stool—nor forget yourself for one single moment when you are talking with women.

"You have heard a great deal about the gallantries of the French ladies, but remember that they demand infinitely greater attention than English

* With sage advice, and many a sober truth,
 The pious mother moulds to shape the
 youth. HAWKE'S Paraphrase.

The application of the second motto rests
 solely upon an untranslatable play of words.

women do ; and that after a month's incessant devotion, you may lose every thing by a moment's neglect.

"You will not, my dear son, misinterpret these hints. I suppose, of course, that all your *liaisons* are platonic.

"Your father is laid up with the gout, and dreadfully ill-tempered and peevish ; however, I keep out of the way as much as possible. I dined yesterday at Lady Roseville's : she praised you very much, said your manners were particularly good, and that no one, if he pleased, could be at once so brilliantly original, yet so completely *bon ton*. Lord Vincent is, I understand, at Paris ; though very tiresome with his learning and Latin, he is exceedingly clever and much in vogue ; be sure to cultivate his acquaintance.

"If you are ever at a loss as to the individual character of a person you wish to gain, the general knowledge of human nature will teach you one infallible specific, — *flattery* ! The quantity and quality may vary according to the exact niceties of art ; but, in any quantity and in any quality, it is more or less acceptable, and therefore certain to please. Only never (or at least very rarely) flatter when other people, besides the one to be flattered, are by ; in that case you offend the rest, and you make even your intended dupe ashamed to be pleased.

"In general, weak minds think only of others, and yet seem only occupied with themselves ; *you*, on the contrary, must appear wholly engrossed with those about you, and yet never have a single idea which does not terminate in yourself : a fool, my dear Henry, flatters himself — a wise man flatters the fool.

"God bless you, my dear child, take care of your health—don't forget Coulon ; and believe me your most affectionate mother, "F. P."

By the time I had read this letter, and dressed myself for the evening, Vincent's carriage was at the door. I hate the affectation of keeping people waiting, and went down so quickly that I met his facetious lordship upon the stairs. "Devilish windy," said I, as we were getting into the carriage.

"Yes," said Vincent ; "but the moral Horace reminds us of our remedies as well as our misfortune—

'Jam galeam Pallas, et ægida,
Currusque—parat'—

viz. : 'Providence that prepares the *gale*, gives us also a great coat and a carriage.'

We were not long driving to the *Palais Royal*. Véry's was crowded to excess—"A very low set !" said Lord Vincent, (who, being half a liberal, is of course a thorough aristocrat,) looking round at the various English who occupied the apartment.

There was, indeed, a motley congregation ; country esquires ; extracts from the universities ; half-pay officers ; city clerks in frogged coats and mustachios ; two or three of a better looking description, but in reality half swindlers, half gentlemen : all, in short, fit specimens of that wandering tribe, which spread over the continent the renown and the ridicule of good old England.

"*Garçon, garçon,*" cried a stout gentleman, who made one of three at the table next to us, "*Donnez-nous une sole frite pour un, et des pommes de terre pour trois !*"

"Humph !" said Lord Vincent ; "fine ideas of English taste these *garçons* must entertain ; men who prefer fried soles and potatoes to the various delicacies they can command here, might, by the same perversion of taste, prefer Bloomfield's poems to Byron's. Delicate taste depends solely upon the physical construction ; and a man who has it not in cookery, must

want it in literature. *Fried sole and potatoes!!* If I had written a volume, whose merit was in elegance, I would not show it to such a man!—but he might be an admirable critic upon ‘Cobbett’s Register,’ or ‘Every Man his own brewer.’”

“Excessively true,” said I; “what shall we order?”

“*D’abord, des huitres d’Ostende,*” said Vincent; “as to the rest,” taking hold of the carte, “*deliberare utilia mora utilissima est.*” *

We were soon engaged in all the pleasures and pains of a dinner.

“*Petimus,*” said Lord Vincent, helping himself to some *poulet à l’Austerlitz*, “*petimus bene vivere,—quod petis, hic est?*” †

We were not, however, assured of that fact at the termination of dinner. If half the dishes were well conceived and better executed, the other half were proportionably bad. Véry is, indeed, no longer the prince of restaurateurs. The low English who have flocked thither, have entirely ruined the place. What waiter—what

cook can possibly respect men who take no soup, and begin with a *rôti*; who know neither what is good nor what is bad; who eat *rognons* at dinner instead of at breakfast, and fall into raptures over *sauce Robert* and *piéds de cochon*; who cannot tell, at the first taste, whether the *beaune* is *première qualité*, or the *fricassée* made of yesterday’s chicken; who suffer in the stomach after a *champion*, and die with indigestion of a *truffle*? O! English people, English people! why can you not stay and perish of apoplexy and Yorkshire pudding at home?

By the time we had drunk our coffee it was considerably past nine o’clock, and Vincent had business at the ambassador’s before ten; we therefore parted for the night.

“What do you think of Véry’s!” said I, as we were at the door.

“Why,” replied Vincent, “when I recall the astonishing heat of the place, which has almost sent me to sleep; the exceeding number of times in which that *bécasse* had been re-roasted, and the extortionate length of our bills, I say of Véry’s, what Hamlet said of the world, ‘*Weary, stale, and unprofitable!*’”

* *To deliberate on things useful is the most useful delay.*

† *We seek to live well—what you seek is none.*

CHAPTER XIII.

I would fight with broad swords, and sink point on the first blood drawn 'tween gentleman's.—*The Chronicles of the Canonicate*

I STROLLED idly along the Palais Royal (which English people, in some silly proverb, call the *capital* of Paris, whereas no French man of any rank, nor French woman of any respectability, is ever seen in its promenades) till, being somewhat curious to enter some of the smaller *cafés*, I went into one of the meanest of them, took up a *Journal des Spectacles*, and called for some lemonade. At the next table to me sat two or three Frenchmen, evidently of inferior rank, and talking very loudly over England and the English. Their attention was soon fixed upon me.

Have you ever observed that if people are disposed to think ill of you, nothing so soon determines them to do so as any act of yours, which, however innocent and inoffensive, differs from their ordinary habits and customs? No sooner had my lemonade made its appearance, than I perceived an increased sensation among my neighbours of the next table. In the first place, lemonade is not much drunk, as you may suppose, among the French in winter; and, in the second, my beverage had an appearance of ostentation, from being one of the dearest articles I could have called for. Unhappily I dropped my newspaper—it fell under the Frenchmen's table; instead of calling the *garçon*, I was foolish enough to stoop for it myself. It was exactly under the feet of one of the Frenchmen; I asked him with the greatest civility, to move: he made no reply. I could not, for the life of me, refrain from giving him a slight, very slight push;

the next moment he moved in good earnest; the whole party sprang up as he set the example. The offended leg gave three terrific stamps upon the ground, and I was immediately assailed by a whole volley of unintelligible abuse. At that time I was very little accustomed to French vehemence, and perfectly unable to reply to the vituperations I received.

Instead of answering them, I therefore deliberated what was best to be done. If, thought I, I walk away, they will think me a coward, and insult me in the streets; if I challenge them, I shall have to fight with men probably no better than shopkeepers; if I strike this most noisy amongst them, he *may* be silenced, or he *may* demand satisfaction: if the former, well and good; if the latter, why I shall have a better excuse for fighting him than I should have now.

My resolution was therefore taken. I was never more free from passion in my life, and it was, therefore, with the utmost calmness and composure that, in the midst of my antagonist's harangue, I raised my hand and—quietly knocked him down.

He rose in a moment. "*Sortons,*" said he, in a low tone, "a Frenchman never forgives a blow!"

At that moment, an Englishman, who had been sitting unnoticed in an obscure corner of the *café*, came up and took me aside.

"Sir," said he, "don't think of fighting the man; he is a tradesman in the *Rue St. Honoré*. I myself have seen him behind the counter;

remember that '*a ram may kill a butcher.*'"

"Sir," I replied, "I thank you a thousand times for your information. Fight, however, I must, and I'll give you, like the Irishman, my reasons afterwards: perhaps you will be my second."

"With pleasure," said the Englishman (a Frenchman would have said, "*with pain!*")

We left the *café* together. My countryman asked them if he should go to the gunsmith's for the pistols.

"Pistols!" said the Frenchman's second: "we will only fight with swords."

"No, no," said my new friend. "*On ne prend pas le lièvre au tambourin.*" We are the challenged, and therefore have the choice of weapons."

Luckily I overheard this dispute, and called to my second—"Swords or pistols," said I; "it is quite the same to me. I am not bad at either, only *do* make haste."

Swords, then, were chosen, and soon procured. Frenchmen never grow cool upon their quarrels: and as it was a fine, clear, starlight night, we went forthwith to the *Bois de Boulogne*. We fixed our ground on a spot tolerably retired, and, I should think, pretty often frequented for the same purpose. I was exceedingly confident, for I knew myself to have few equals in the art of fencing; and I had all the advantage of coolness, which my hero was a great deal too much in earnest to possess. We joined swords, and in a very few moments I discovered that my opponent's life was at my disposal.

"*C'est bien,*" thought I; "for once I'll behave handsomely."

The Frenchman made a desperate lunge. I struck his sword from his hand, caught it instantly, and, presenting it to him again, said—

"I think myself peculiarly fortunate that I may now apologise for the affront I have put upon you. Will you permit my sincerest apologies to suffice? A man who can so well resent an injury, can forgive one."

Was there ever a Frenchman not taken by a fine phrase? My hero received the sword with a low bow—the tears came into his eyes.

"Sir," said he, "you have *twice* conquered."

We left the spot with the greatest amity and affection, and re-entered, with a profusion of bows, our several *fiacres*.

"Let me," I said, when I found myself alone with my second, "let me thank you most cordially for your assistance; and allow me to cultivate an acquaintance so singularly begun. I lodge at the *Hotel de—, Rue de Rivoli*; my name is Pelham. Yours is—"

"Thornton," replied my countryman. "I will lose no time in profiting by an offer of acquaintance which does me so much honour."

With these and various other fine speeches, we employed the time till I was set down at my hotel; and my companion, drawing his cloak round him, departed on foot, to fulfil (he said, with a mysterious air) a certain assignation in the *Faubourg St. Germain*.

CHAPTER XIV.

Erat homo ingeniosus, acutus, acer, et qui plurimum et salis haberet et fellis, nec candoris minus.—PLINY.*

I DO not know a more difficult character to describe than Lord Vincent's. Did I imitate certain writers, who think that the whole art of portraying individual character is to seize hold of some prominent peculiarity, and to introduce this distinguishing trait, in all times and in all scenes, the difficulty would be removed. I should only have to present to the reader a man, whose conversation was nothing but alternate jest and quotation—a due union of Yorick and Partridge. This would, however, be rendering great injustice to the character I wish to delineate. There were times when Vincent was earnestly engrossed in discussion in which a jest rarely escaped him, and quotation was introduced only as a serious illustration, not as a humorous peculiarity. He possessed great miscellaneous erudition, and a memory perfectly surprising for its fidelity and extent. He was a severe critic, and had a peculiar art of quoting from each author he reviewed, some part that particularly told against him. Like most men, if in the theory of philosophy he was tolerably rigid, in its practice he was more than tolerably loose. By his tenets you would have considered him a very Cato for stubbornness and sternness: yet was he a very child in his concession to the whim of the moment. Fond of meditation and research, he was still fonder of mirth and amusement; and while he

was among the most instructive, he was also the boonest, of companions. When alone with me, or with men whom he imagined like me, his pedantry (for more or less, he always *was* pedantic) took only a jocular tone; with the *savant* or the *bel esprit*, it became grave, searching, and sarcastic. He was rather a contradictor than a favourer of ordinary opinions: and this, perhaps, led him not unoften into paradox: yet was there much soundness, even in his most vehement notions, and the strength of mind which made him think only for himself, was visible in all the productions it created. I have hitherto only given his conversation in one of its moods; henceforth I shall be just enough occasionally to be dull, and to present it sometimes to the reader in a graver tone.

Buried deep beneath the surface of his character, was a hidden, yet a restless ambition: but this was perhaps, at present, a secret even to himself. We know not our own characters till time teaches us self-knowledge: if we are *wise*, we may thank ourselves; if we are *great*, we must thank fortune.

It was this insight into Vincent's nature which drew us closer together. I recognised in the man, who as yet was playing a part, a resemblance to myself, while he, perhaps, saw at times that I was somewhat better than the voluptuary, and somewhat wiser than the coxcomb, which were all that at present it suited me to appear.

In person, Vincent was short, and

* "He was a clever and able man—acute, sharp—with abundance of wit and no less of candour.—COOKE."

ungracefully formed—but his countenance was singularly fine. His eyes were dark, bright and penetrating, and his forehead (high and thoughtful) corrected the playful smile of his mouth, which might otherwise have given to his features too great an expression of levity. He was not positively ill dressed, yet he paid no attention to any external art, except cleanliness. His usual garb was a brown coat, much too large for him, a coloured neckcloth, a spotted waistcoat, grey trowsers, and short gaiters: add to these gloves of most unsullied doeskin, and a curiously thick cane, and the portrait is complete.

In manners, he was civil, or rude,

familiar, or distant, just as the whim seized him; never was there any address less common, and less artificial. What a rare gift, by the by, is that of manners! how difficult to define—how much more difficult to impart! Better for a man to possess them, than wealth, beauty, or even talent, if it fall short of genius—they will more than supply all. He who enjoys their advantages in the highest degree; viz., he who can please, penetrate, persuade, as the object may require, possesses the subtlest secret of the diplomatist and the statesman, and wants nothing but luck and opportunity to become "*great*."

CHAPTER XV.

Le plaisir de la société entre les amis se cultive par une ressemblance de goût sur ce qui regarde les mœurs, et par quelque différence d'opinions sur les sciences; par là on s'affermir dans ses sentiments, ou l'on s'exerce et l'on s'instruit par la dispute.*—LA BRUYÈRE.

THERE was a party at Monsieur de V——e's, to which Vincent and myself were the only Englishmen invited: accordingly, as the Hotel de V. was in the same street as my hotel, we dined together at my rooms, and walked from thence to the minister's house.

The party was as stiff and formal as such assemblies invariably are, and we were both delighted when we espied Monsieur d'A——, a man of much conversational talent, and some celebrity as an ultra writer, forming a little group in one corner of the room.

We took advantage of our acquaint-

ance with the urbane Frenchman to join his party; the conversation turned almost entirely on literary subjects. Allusion being made to Schlegel's History of Literature, and the severity with which he speaks of Helvetius, and the philosophers of his school, we began to discuss what harm the free thinkers in philosophy had effected.

"For my part," said Vincent, "I am not able to divine why we are supposed, in works where there is much truth, and little falsehood, much good, and a little evil, to see only the evil and the falsehood, to the utter exclusion of the truth and the good. All men whose minds are sufficiently laborious or acute to love the reading of metaphysical inquiries, will by the same labour and acuteness separate the chaff from the corn—the false from the true. It is the young, the light, the superficial who are easily misled by error, and

* The pleasure of society amongst friends is cultivated by resemblance of taste as to manners, but some difference of opinion as to mental acquisitions. Thus while it is confirmed by congeniality of sentiments, it gains exercise and instruction by intellectual discussion.

incapable of discerning its fallacy; but tell me if it is the light, the young, the superficial, who are in the habit of reading the abstruse and subtle speculations of the philosopher. No, no! believe me that it is *the very studies Monsieur Schlegel recommends* which do harm to morality and virtue; *it is the study of literature itself*, the play, the poem, the novel, which all minds, however frivolous, can enjoy and understand, that constitute the real foes of religion and moral improvement."

"*Ma foi*," cried Monsieur de G., (who was a little writer, and a great reader, of romances,) "why you would not deprive us of the politer literature—you would not bid us shut up our novels, and burn our theatres!"

"Certainly not!" replied Vincent; "and it is in this particular that I differ from certain modern philosophers of our own country, for whom, for the most part, I entertain the highest veneration. I would not deprive life of a single grace, or a single enjoyment, but I would counteract whatever is pernicious in whatever is elegant: if among my flowers there is a snake, I would not root up my flowers, I would kill the snake. Thus, who are they that derive from fiction and literature a prejudicial effect? We have seen already—the light and superficial?—*but* who are they that derive profit from them?—they who enjoy well regulated and discerning minds; who pleasure?—*all mankind!* Would it not therefore be better, instead of depriving some of profit, and all of pleasure, by banishing poetry and fiction from our Utopia, to correct the minds which find evil, where, if they were properly instructed, they would find good? Whether we agree with Helvetius, that all men are born with an equal capacity of improvement, or merely go the length with all other metaphysicians, that education can improve the human mind to an extent yet incalculable, it must be quite clear,

that we can give sound views, instead of fallacies, and make common truths as easy to discern and adopt as common errors. But if we effect this, which we all allow is so easy, with our children; if we strengthen their minds, instead of weakening them, and clear their vision, rather than confuse it, from that moment, we remove the prejudicial effects of fiction, and just as we have taught them to use a knife, without cutting their fingers, we teach them to make use of fiction without perverting it to their prejudice. *What philosopher* was ever hurt by reading the novels of L * * *, or seeing the comedies of Molière? You understand me, then, Monsieur de G., I do, it is true, think that polite literature (as it is termed) is prejudicial to the superficial, but, for that reason, I would not do away with the literature, I would do away with the superficial."

"I deny," said M. d'A——, "that this is so easy a task—you cannot make all *men* wise."

"No," replied Vincent! "but you can all *children*, at least to a certain extent. Since you cannot deny the prodigious effects of education, you *must* allow that they will, at least, give common sense; for if they cannot do this, they can do nothing. Now common sense is all that is necessary to distinguish what is good and evil, whether it be in life or in books: but then your education must not be that of public teaching and private fooling; you must not counteract the effects of common sense by instilling prejudice, or encouraging weakness; your education may not be carried to the utmost goal, but as far as it does go, you must see that the road is clear. Now, for instance, with regard to fiction, you must not first, as is done in all modern education, admit the disease, and then dose with warm water to expel it: you must not put fiction into your child's hands, and not give him a single principle to guide his

judgment respecting it, till his mind has got wedded to the poison, and too weak, by its long use, to digest the antidote. No; first fortify his intellect by reason, and you may then please his fancy by fiction. Do not excite his imagination with love and glory, till you can instruct his judgment as to what love and glory *are*. Teach him, in short, to *reflect*, before you permit him full indulgence to *imagine*."

Here there was a pause. Monsieur D'A—— looked very ill-pleased, and poor Monsieur de G—— thought that somehow or other his romance writing was called into question. In order to soothe them, I introduced some subject which permitted a little national flattery; the conversation then turned insensibly on the character of the French people.

"Never," said Vincent, "has there been a character more often described—never one less understood. You have been termed superficial. I think, of all people, that you least deserve the accusation. With regard to the *few*, your philosophers, your mathematicians, your men of science, are consulted by those of other nations, as some of their profoundest authorities. With regard to the *many*, the charge is still more unfounded. Compare your mob, whether of gentlemen or plebeians, to those of Germany, Italy—even England—and I own, in spite of my national prepossessions, that the comparison is infinitely in your favour. The country gentleman, the lawyer, the *petit maître* of England, are proverbially inane and ill-informed. With you, the classes of society that answer to those respective grades, have much information in literature, and often not a little in science. In like manner, your tradesmen, and your servants, are of better cultivated, and less prejudiced minds than those ranks in England. The fact is, that *all* with you pretend to be *savans*, and this is the chief reason why you have been

censured as shallow. We see your fine gentleman, or your *petit bourgeois*, give himself the airs of a critic or a philosopher; and because he is neither a Scaliger nor a Newton, we forget that he is *only* the *bourgeois* or the *petit maître*, and brand all your philosophers and critics with the censure of superficiality, which this shallow individual of a shallow order may justly have deserved. We, the English, it is true, do not expose ourselves thus: our dandies, our tradesmen, do not vent second-rate philosophy on the human mind, nor on *les beaux arts*: but why is this? Not because they are better informed than their correspondent ciphers in France, but because they are much worse informed; not because they can say a great deal more on the subject, but because they can say nothing at all."

"You do us more than justice," said Mons. D'A——, "in this instance: are you disposed to do us justice in another? It is a favourite propensity of your countrymen to accuse us of heartlessness and want of feeling. Think you that this accusation is deserved?"

"By no means," replied Vincent. "The same cause that brought on you the erroneous censure we have before mentioned, appears to me also to have created this; viz., a sort of *Palais Royal* vanity, common to all your nation, which induces you to make as much display at the shop window as possible. You show great cordiality, and even enthusiasm, to strangers: you turn your back on them—you forget them. 'How heartless!' cry we. Not at all! The English show no cordiality, no enthusiasm to strangers, it is true: but they equally turn their backs on them, and equally forget them! The only respect, therefore, in which they differ from you, is the previous kindness: now if we are to receive strangers I can really see no reason why we are

not to be as civil to them as possible ; and so far from imputing the desire to please them to a bad heart, I think it a thousand times more amiable and benevolent than telling them *à l'Anglaise*, by your morosity and reserve, that you do not care a pin what becomes of them. If I am only to walk a mile with a man, why should I not make that mile as pleasant to him as I can : or why, above all, if I choose to be sulky, and tell him to go and be d—d, am I to swell out my chest, colour with conscious virtue, and cry, see what a good heart I have !* Ah, Monsieur d'A——, since benevolence is inseparable from all morality, it must be clear that there is a benevolence in little things as well as in great, and that he who strives to make his fellow-creatures happy, though only for an instant, is a much better man than he who is indifferent to, or (what is worse) despises it. Nor do I, to say truth, see that kindness to an acquaintance is at all destructive to sincerity to a friend ; on the contrary, I have yet to learn, that you are (according to the customs of your country) worse friends,

worse husbands, or worse fathers than we are !”

“What !” cried I, “you forget yourself, Vincent. How can the private virtues be cultivated without a coal fire ? Is not domestic affection a synonymous term with *domestic hearth* ? and where do you find either, except in honest old England ?”

“True,” replied Vincent ; “and it is certainly impossible for a father and his family to be as fond of each other on a bright day in the *Tuileries*, or at *Versailles*, with music and dancing, and fresh air, as they would be in a back parlour, by a smoky hearth, occupied entirely by *le bon père, et la bonne mère* ; while the poor little children sit at the other end of the table, whispering and shivering, debarred the vent of all natural spirits, for fear of making a noise : and strangely uniting the idea of the domestic hearth with that of a hob-goblin, and the association of dear papa with that of a birch rod.”

We all laughed at this reply, and Monsieur d'A——, rising to depart, said, “Well, well, *milord*, your countrymen are great generalisers in philosophy ; they reduce human actions to two grand touchstones. All hilarity, they consider the sign of a shallow mind ; and all kindness, the token of a false heart.”

* Mr. Pelham, it will be remembered, has prevised the reader, that Lord Vincent was somewhat addicted to paradox. His opinions on the French character are to be taken with a certain reserve.—*Author.*

CHAPTER XVI.

——— Quis sapiens bono
 Confidat fragili?—SENECA.

Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub judice lis est.†—HOR.

WHEN I first went to Paris, I took a French master to perfect me in the Parisian pronunciation. This "Haber-dasher of pronouns" was a person of the name of Margot. He was a tall, solemn man, with a face of the most imperturbable gravity. He would have been inestimable as an undertaker. His hair was of a pale yellow; you would have thought it had caught a bilious complaint from his complexion: the latter was, indeed, of so sombre a saffron, that it looked as if ten livers had been forced into a jaundice, in order to supply its colour. His forehead was high, bald, and very narrow. His cheekbones were extremely prominent, and his cheeks so thin, that they seemed happier than Pyramus and Thisbe, and kissed each other inside without any separation or division. His face was as sharp and almost as long as an inverted pyramid, and was garnished on either side by a miserable half-starved whisker, which seemed scarcely able to maintain itself amidst the general symptoms of atrophy and decay. This charming countenance was supported by a figure so long, so straight, so shadowy, that you might have taken it for the monument in a consumption!

But the chief characteristic of the man was the utter and wonderful gravity I have before spoken of. You

could no more have coaxed a smile out of his countenance than you could out of the poker; and yet Monsieur Margot was by no means a melancholy man. He loved his joke, and his wine, and his dinner, just as much as if he had been of a fatter frame; and it was a fine specimen of the practical antithesis, to hear a good story, or a jovial expression, leap friskily out of that long, curved mouth; it was at once a paradox and a bathos—it was the mouse coming out of its hole in Ely Cathedral.

I said that this gravity was M. Margot's most especial characteristic. I forgot:—he had two others equally remarkable: the one was an ardent admiration for the chivalrous, the other an ardent admiration for himself. Both of these are traits common enough in a Frenchman, but in Monsieur Margot their excesses rendered them *uncommon*. He was a most ultra specimen of *le chevalier amoureux*—a mixture of Don Quixote and the Duc de Lauzun. Whenever he spoke of the present tense, even *en professeur*, he always gave a sigh to the preterite, and an anecdote of Bayard; whenever he conjugated a verb, he paused to tell me that the favourite one of his female pupils was *je t'aime*.

In short, he had tales of his own good fortune, and of other people's brave exploits, which, without much exaggeration, were almost as long, and had perhaps as little substance,

* *What wise man confides in the fragile?*
 —SENECA.

† *Grammarians dispute, and the matter is still under consideration of the judge.*—

HORACE

as himself; but the former was his favourite topic: to hear him, one would have imagined that his face, in borrowing the sharpness of the needle, had borrowed also its attraction;—and then the prettiness of Monsieur Margot's modesty!

"It is very extraordinary," said he, "very extraordinary, for I have no time to give myself up to those affairs: it is not, Monsieur, as if I had your leisure to employ all the little preliminary arts of creating *la belle passion*. Non, Monsieur, I go to church, to the play, to the Tuileries, for a brief relaxation—and *me voilà par-tout accablé* with my good fortune. I am not handsome, Monsieur, at least, not *very*; it is true, that I have expression, a certain *air noble*, (my first cousin, Monsieur, is the Chevalier de Margot,) and above all, *soul* in my physiognomy; the women love soul, Monsieur—something intellectual and spiritual always attracts them; yet my success certainly is singular."

"Bah! Monsieur," replied I: "with dignity, expression, and soul, how could the heart of any French woman resist you? No, you do yourself injustice. It was said of Caesar, that he was great without an effort; much more, then, may Monsieur Margot be happy without an exertion."

"Ah, Monsieur!" rejoined the Frenchman, still looking

is very handsome, — *Ah quelle est belle! une jolie petite bouche, une denture éblouissante, un nez tout à fait grec, in fine, quité a bouton de rose.*"

I expressed my envy at Monsieur Margot's good fortune, and when he had sufficiently dilated upon it, he withdrew. Shortly afterwards Vincent entered—"I have a dinner invitation for both of us to-day," said he; "you will come?"

"Most certainly," replied I; "but who is the person we are to honour?"

"A Madame Laurent," replied Vincent; "one of those ladies only found at Paris, who live upon anything rather than their income. She keeps a tolerable table, haunted with Poles, Russians, Austrians, and idle Frenchmen, *peregrinæ gentis amicum hospitium*. As yet she has not the happiness to be acquainted with any Englishmen, (though she boards one of our countrywomen) and (as she is desirous of making her fortune as soon as possible) she is very anxious of having that honour. She has heard vast reports of our wealth and wisdom, and flatters herself that we are so many ambulatory Indies: in good truth, a Frenchwoman thinks she is never in want of a fortune as long as there a rich fool in the world.

Stultitiam patiuntur opes.

is her hope: and

Ut tu fortunam, sic nos te, Celse, feremus.

is her motto."

"Madame Laurent!" repeated I, "why, surely that is the name of Mons. Margot's landlady."

"I hope not," cried Vincent, "for the sake of our dinner; he reflects no credit on her good cheer—"

'Who eats fat dinners, should himself be fat.'

"At all events," said I, "we can try the good lady for once. I am very anxious to see a countrywoman of

"As weak, as earnest, and as gravely out
As sober Lanesbro' dancing with the gout."

"Ah, Monsieur, there is a depth and truth in your remarks, worthy of Montaigne. As it is impossible to account for the caprices of women, so it is impossible for ourselves to analyse the merit they discover in us; but, Monsieur, hear me—at the house where I lodge there is an English lady *en pension*. *Eh bien, Monsieur*, you guess the rest; she has taken a caprice for me, and this very night she will admit me to her apartment. She

ours, probably the very one you speak of, whom Mons. Margot eulogises in glowing colours, and who has, moreover, taken a violent fancy for my solemn preceptor. What think you of that, Vincent?"

"Nothing extraordinary," replied Vincent; "the lady only exclaims with the moralist—

Love, virtue, valour, yea, all human charms,
Are shrunk and centred in that heap of bones.
Oh! there are wondrous beauties in the grave!"

I made some punning rejoinder, and we sallied out to earn an appetite in the Tuileries for Madame Laurent's dinner.

At the hour of half-past five we repaired to our engagement. Madame Laurent received us with the most evident satisfaction, and introduced us forthwith to our countrywoman. She was a pretty, fair, shrewd-looking person, with an eye and lip which, unless it greatly belied her, showed her much more inclined to be merry and wise, than honest and true.

Presently Monsieur Margot made his appearance. Though very much surprised at seeing me, he did not appear the least jealous of my attentions to his *inamorata*. Indeed, the good gentleman was far too much pleased with himself to be susceptible to the suspicions common to less fortunate lovers. At dinner I sat next to the pretty Englishwoman, whose name was Green.

"Monsieur Margot," said I, "has often spoken to me of you before I had the happiness of being personally convinced how true and unexaggerated were his sentiments."

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Green, with an arch laugh, "you are acquainted with Monsieur Margot, then?"

"I have that honour," said I. "I receive from him every morning lessons both in love and languages. He is perfect master of both."

Mrs. Green burst out laughing.

"Ah, le pauvre Professeur!" cried she. "He is too absurd!"

"He tells me," said I gravely, "that he is quite *accablé* with his *bonnes fortunes*—possibly he flatters himself that even you are not perfectly inaccessible to his addresses."

"Tell me, Mr. Pelham," said the fair Mrs. Green, "can you pass by this street about half-past twelve to-night?"

"I will make a point of doing so," replied I, not a little surprised by her question.

"Do," said she, "and now let us talk of old England."

When we went away I told Vincent of my appointment.

"What!" said he, "eclipse Monsieur Margot! Impossible!"

"You are right," replied I, "nor is it my hope; there is some trick afloat to which we may as well be spectators."

"With all my heart!" answered Vincent; "let us go till then to the Duchesse de G——." I assented, and we drove to the Rue de ——.

"The Duchesse de G—— was a fine relic of the *ancien régime*—tall and stately, with her own grey hair *crêpé*, and surmounted by a high cap of the most dazzling *blonde*. She had been one of the earliest emigrants, and had stayed for many months with my mother, whom she professed to rank amongst her dearest friends. The Duchesse possessed to perfection that singular *mélange* of ostentation and ignorance which was so peculiar to the ante-revolutionists. She would talk of the last tragedy with the emphatic tone of a connoisseur, in the same breath that she would ask, with Marie Antoinette, why the poor people were so clamorous for *bread*, when they might buy such nice cakes for twopence a-piece? "To give you an idea of the Irish," said she one day to an inquisitive marquess, "know that they *prefer* potatoes to mutton!"

Her *soirées* were among the most agreeable at Paris—she united all the rank and talent to be found in the ultra party, for she professed to be quite a female Mæneas; and whether it was a mathematician or a romance-writer, a naturalist or a poet, she held open house for all, and conversed with each with equal fluency and self-satisfaction.

A new play had just been acted, and the conversation, after a few preliminary *homerings*, settled upon it.

"You see," said the Duchesse, "that we have actors, *you* authors; of what avail is it that you boast of a Shakespeare, since your *Liseton*, great as he is, cannot be compared with our Talma?"

"And yet," said I, preserving my gravity with a pertinacity, which nearly made Vincent and the rest of our compatriots assembled lose theirs, "Madame must allow that there is a striking resemblance in their persons, and the sublimity of their acting?"

"*Pour ça, j'en conviens*," replied this critique de l'Ecole des Femmes. "*Mais cependant Liseton n'a pas la nature, l'âme, la grandeur de Talma!*"*

"And will you then allow us no actors of merit?" asked Vincent.

"*Mais oui!—dans le genre comique, par exemple votre buffo Kean met dix fois plus d'esprit et de drollerie dans ses rôles que La Porte.*"†

"The impartial and profound judgment of Madame admits of no further discussion on this point," said I. "What does she think of the present state of our dramatic literature?"

"Why," replied Madame, "you have many great poets; but when they write for the stage they lose themselves entirely: your Valter

Scote's play of Robe Roi is very inferior to his novel of the same name."

"It is a great pity," said I, "that Byron did not turn his Childe Harold into a tragedy—it has so much *energy, action—variety!*"

"Very true," said Madame, with a sigh; "but the tragedy is, after all, only suited to our nation—we alone carry it to perfection."

"Yet," said I, "*Goldoni* wrote a few fine tragedies."

"*Eh bien!*" said Madame, "one rose does not constitute a garden!"

And satisfied with this remark, *la femme savante* turned to a celebrated traveller to discuss with him the chance of discovering the North Pole.

There were one or two clever Englishmen present; Vincent and I joined them.

"Have you met the Persian prince yet?" said Sir George Lynton to me; "he is a man of much talent, and great desire of knowledge. He intends to publish his observations on Paris, and I suppose we shall have an admirable supplement to Montesquieu's *Lettres Persannes!*"

"I wish we had," said Vincent: "there are few better satires on a civilised country than the observations of visitors less polished; while on the contrary the civilised traveller, in describing the manners of the American barbarian, instead of conveying ridicule upon the visited, points the sarcasm on the visitor; and Tacitus could not have thought of a finer or nobler satire on the Roman luxuries than that insinuated by his treatise on the German simplicity."

"What," said Monsieur d'E—— (an intelligent *ci-devant émigré*), "what political writer is generally esteemed as your best?"

"It is difficult to say," replied Vincent, "since with so many parties we have many idols; but I think I might venture to name Bolingbroke

* I grant that, but Liston, however, has not the nature, the soul, the grandeur, of Talma.

† Yes, in comedy, for instance, your Kean has ten times more vivacity and drolery than La Porte.

as among the most popular. Perhaps, indeed, it would be difficult to select a name more frequently quoted and discussed than his; and yet his political works are not very valuable from political knowledge:—they contain many lofty sentiments, and many beautiful yet scattered truths; but they were written when legislation, most debated, was least understood, and ought to be admired rather as excellent for the day than admirable in themselves. The life of Bolingbroke would convey a juster moral than all his writings: and the author who gives us a full and impartial memoir of that extraordinary man, will have afforded both to the philosophical and political literature of England one of its greatest desiderata.”

“It seems to me,” said Monsieur d'E——, “that your national literature is peculiarly deficient in biography—am I right in my opinion?”

“Indubitably!” said Vincent; “we have not a single work that can be considered a model in biography (excepting, *perhaps*, Middleton's Life of Cicero). This brings on a remark I have often made in distinguishing your philosophy from ours. It seems to me that you who excel so admirably in biography, memoirs, comedy, satirical observation on peculiar classes, and pointed aphorisms, are fonder of considering man in his relation to society and the active commerce of the world, than in the more abstracted and metaphysical operations of the mind. Our writers, on the contrary, love to indulge rather in abstruse speculations on their species—to regard man in an abstract and isolated point of view, and to see him *think* alone in his chamber, while you prefer beholding him *act* with the multitude in the world.”

“It must be allowed,” said Monsieur d'E——, “that if this be true, our philosophy is the most useful, though yours may be the most profound.”

Vincent did not reply.

“Yet,” said Sir George Lynton “there will be a disadvantage attending your writings of this description, which, by diminishing their general *applicability*, diminish their general *utility*. Works which treat upon man in his relation to society, can only be strictly applicable so long as that relation to society treated upon continues. For instance, the play which satirises a particular class, however deep its reflections and accurate its knowledge upon the subject satirised, must necessarily be obsolete when the class itself has become so. The political pamphlet, admirable for one state, may be absurd in another; the novel which exactly delineates the present age may seem strange and unfamiliar to the next; and thus works which treat of men relatively, and not man *in se*, must often confine their popularity to the age and even the country in which they were written. While on the other hand, the work which treats of man himself, which seizes, discovers, analyses the human mind, as it is, whether in the ancient or the modern, the savage or the European, must evidently be applicable, and consequently useful, to all times and all nations. He who discovers the circulation of the blood, or the origin of ideas, must be a philosopher to every people who have veins or ideas; but he who even most successfully delineates the manners of one country, or the actions of one individual, is only the philosopher of a single country, or a single age. If, Monsieur d'E——, you will condescend to consider this, you will see perhaps that the philosophy which treats of man in his relations is *not* so useful, because neither so permanent nor so invariable, as that which treats of man in himself.”*

* Yet Hume holds the contrary opinion to this, and considers a good comedy more durable than a system of philosophy. Hume

I was now somewhat wary of this conversation, and though it was not yet twelve, I seized upon my appointment as an excuse to depart—accordingly I rose for that purpose. “I

suppose,” said I to Vincent, “that you will not leave your discussion.”

“Pardon me,” said he, “amusement is quite as profitable to a man of sense as metaphysics. *Allons.*”

CHAPTER XVII.

I was in this terrible situation when the basket stopped.

Oriental Tales—History of the Basket.

WE took our way to the street in which Madame Laurent resided. Meanwhile suffer me to *get rid of myself*, and to introduce you, dear Reader, to my friend, Monsieur Margot, the whole of whose adventures were subsequently detailed to me by the garrulous Mrs. Green.

At the hour appointed he knocked at the door of my fair countrywoman, and was carefully admitted. He was attired in a dressing-gown of sea-green silk, in which his long, lean, hungry body, looked more like a starved pike than any thing human.

“Madame,” said he, with a solemn air, “I return you my best thanks for the honour you have done me—behold me at your feet!”—and so saying, the lean lover gravely knelt down on one knee.

“Rise, sir,” said Mrs. Green, “I confess that you have won my heart;

is right, if by a system of philosophy is understood—a pile of guesses, false but plausible, set up by one age to be destroyed by the next. Ingenuity cannot rescue error from oblivion; but the moment Wisdom has discovered Truth, she has obtained immortality.—But is Hume right when he suggests that there may come a time when Addison will be read with delight, but Locke be utterly forgotten? For my part, if the two were to be matched for posterity, I think the odds would be in favour of Locke. I very much doubt whether five hundred years hence, Addison will be read at all, and I am quite sure that, a thousand years hence, Locke will not be forgotten

but that is not all—you have yet to show that you are worthy of the opinion I have formed of you. It is not, Monsieur Margot, your person that has won me—no! it is your chivalrous and noble sentiments—prove that these are genuine, and you may command all from my admiration.”

“In what manner shall I prove it, madame?” said Monsieur Margot, rising, and gracefully drawing his sea-green gown more closely round him.

“By your courage, your devotion, and your gallantry! I ask but one proof—you can give it me on the spot. You remember, monsieur, that in the days of romance, a lady threw her glove upon the stage on which a lion was exhibited, and told her lover to pick it up. Monsieur Margot, the trial to which I shall put you is less severe. Look, (and Mrs. Green threw open the window)—look, I throw my glove out into the street—descend for it.”

“Your commands are my law,” said the romantic Margot. “I will go forthwith,” and so saying, he went to the door.

“Hold, sir!” said the lady, “it is not by that simple manner that you are to descend—you must go the same way as my glove, *out of the window.*”

“Out of the window, madame!” said Monsieur Margot, with astonished solemnity; “that is impossible, be

cause this apartment is three stories high, and consequently I shall be dashed to pieces."

"By no means," answered the dame; "in that corner of the room there is a basket, to which (already foreseeing your determination) I have affixed a rope; by that basket you shall descend. See, monsieur, what expedients a provident love can suggest."

"H—e—m!" said, very slowly, Monsieur Margot, by no means liking the airy voyage imposed upon him; "but the rope may break, or your hand may suffer it to slip."

"Feel the rope," cried the lady, "to satisfy you as to your first doubt; and, as to the second, can you—*can* you imagine that my affections would not make me twice as careful of your person as of my own? Fie! ungrateful Monsieur Margot! fie!"

The melancholy chevalier cast a rueful look at the basket. "Madame," said he, "I own that I am very averse to the plan you propose: suffer me to go down stairs in the ordinary way; your glove can be as easily picked up whether your adorer goes out of the door or the window. It is only, madame, when ordinary means fail, that we should have recourse to the extraordinary."

"Begone, sir!" exclaimed Mrs. Green—"begone! I now perceive that your chivalry was only a pretence. Fool that I was to love you as I have done!—fool that I was to imagine a hero where I now find a——"

"Pause, madame, I will obey you—my heart is firm—see that the *rope* is!——"

"Gallant Monsieur Margot!" cried the lady: and going to her dressing-room, she called her woman to her assistance. The rope was of the most unquestionable thickness, the basket of the most capacious dimensions. The former was fastened to a strong hook—and the latter lowered.

"I go, madame," said Monsieur

Margot, feeling the rope; "but it really is a most dangerous exploit."

"Go, monsieur! and St. Louis befriend you!"

"Stop!" said Monsieur Margot, "let me fetch my coat: the night is cold, and my dressing-gown thin."

"Nay, nay, my chevalier," returned the dame, "I love you in that gown: it gives you an air of grace and dignity quite enchanting."

"It will give me my death of cold, madame," said Monsieur Margot, earnestly.

"Bah!" said the Englishwoman: "what knight ever feared cold? Besides, you mistake; the night is warm, and you look so handsome in your gown."

"Do I!" said the vain Monsieur Margot, with an iron expression of satisfaction. "If that is the case, I will mind it less; but may I return by the door?"

"Yes," replied the lady; "you see that I do not require too much from your devotion—enter."

"Behold me!" said the French master, inserting his body into the basket, which immediately began to descend.

The hour and the police of course made the street empty; the lady's handkerchief waved in token of encouragement and triumph. When the basket was within five yards of the ground, Mrs. Green cried to her lover, who had hitherto been elevating his serious countenance towards her, in sober, yet gallant sadness—

"Look, look, monsieur—straight before you."

The lover turned round, as rapidly as his habits would allow him, and at that instant the window was shut, the light extinguished, and the basket arrested. There stood Monsieur Margot, upright in the basket, and there stopped the basket, motionless in the air!

What were the exact reflections of

Monsieur Margot, in that position, I cannot pretend to determine, because he never favoured me with them; but about an hour afterwards, Vincent and I (who had been delayed on the road), strolling up the street, according to our appointment, perceived, by the dim lamps, some opaque body leaning against the wall of Madame Laurent's house, at about the distance of fifteen feet from the ground.

We hastened our steps towards it; a measured and serious voice, which I well knew, accosted us—

"For God's sake, gentlemen, procure me assistance. I am the victim of a perfidious woman, and expect every moment to be precipitated to the earth."

"Good heavens!" said I, "surely it is Monsieur Margot whom I hear. What are you doing there?"

"Shivering with cold," answered Monsieur Margot in a tone tremulously slow.

"But what are you *in*? for I can see nothing but a dark substance."

"I am in a basket," replied Monsieur Margot, "and I should be very much obliged to you to let me out of it."

"Well—indeed," said Vincent (for I was too much engaged in laughing to give a ready reply), "your *Château-Margot* has but a cool cellar. But there are some things in the world easier said than done. How are we to remove you to a more desirable place?"

"Ah," returned Monsieur Margot, "*how* indeed! There is, to be sure, a ladder in the porter's lodge long enough to deliver me; but then, think of the gibes and jeers of the porter!—it will get wind—I shall be ridiculed, gentlemen—I shall be ridiculed—and what is worse, I shall lose my pupils."

"My good friend," said I, "you had better lose your pupils than your life; and the day-light will soon come, and

then, instead of being ridiculed by the porter, you will be ridiculed by the whole street!"

Monsieur Margot groaned. "Go, then, my friend," said he, "procure the ladder! Oh, those she devils!—what *could* make me such a fool!"

Whilst Monsieur Margot was venting his spleen in a scarcely articulate mutter, we repaired to the lodge, knocked up the porter, communicated the *accident*, and procured the ladder. However, an observant eye had been kept upon our proceedings, and the window above was re opened, though so silently that I only perceived the action. The porter, a jolly, bluff, hearty-looking fellow, stood grinning below with a lantern, while we set the ladder (which only just reached the basket) against the wall.

The chevalier looked wistfully forth, and then, by the light of the lantern, we had a fair view of his ridiculous figure. His teeth chattered woefully, and the united cold without and anxiety within, threw a double sadness and solemnity upon his withered countenance. The night was very windy, and every instant a rapid current seized the unhappy sea-green vesture, whirled it in the air, and threw it, as if in scorn, over the very face of the miserable professor. The constant recurrence of this sportive irreverence of the gales—the high sides of the basket, and the trembling agitation of the inmate, never too agile, rendered it a work of some time for Monsieur Margot to transfer himself from the basket to the ladder. At length, he had fairly got out one thin, shivering leg.

"Thank Heaven!" said the pious professor—when at that instant the thanksgiving was checked, and, to Monsieur Margot's inexpressible astonishment and dismay, the basket rose five feet from the ladder, leaving its tenant with one leg dangling out, like a flag from a balloon.

The ascent was too rapid to allow Monsieur Margot even time for an exclamation, and it was not till he had had sufficient leisure in his present elevation to perceive all its consequences, that he found words to say, with the most earnest tone of thoughtful lamentation, "One could not have foreseen this!—it is really extremely distressing—would to Heaven that I could get my leg in, or my body out!"

While we were yet too convulsed with laughter to make any comment upon the unlooked-for ascent of the luminous Monsieur Margot, the basket descended with such force as to dash the lantern out of the hand of the porter, and to bring the professor so precipitously to the ground, that all the bones in his skin rattled audibly.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said he, "I am done for! Be witness how inhumanly I have been murdered."

We pulled him out of the basket, and carried him between us into the porter's lodge. But the woes of Monsieur Margot were not yet at their termination. The room was crowded. There was Madame Laurent,—there was the German count, whom the professor was teaching French—there was the French viscount, whom he was teaching German—there were all his fellow-lodgers, the ladies whom he had boasted of, the men he had boasted to. Don Juan, in the infernal regions, could not have met with a more unwelcome set of old acquaintances than Monsieur Margot had the happiness of opening his bewildered eyes upon in the porter's lodge.

"What!" cried they all, "Monsieur Margot, is that you who have been frightening us so? We thought the house was attacked. The Russian general is at this very moment loading his pistols; lucky for you that you did not choose to stay longer in that situation. Pray, monsieur, what

could induce you to exhibit yourself so, in your dressing-gown too, and the night so cold? Ar'n't you ashamed of yourself?"

All this, and infinitely more, was levelled against the miserable professor, who stood shivering with cold and fright; and turning his eyes first on one, and then on another, as the exclamations circulated round the room.

"I do assure you——" at length he began.

"No, no," cried one, "it is of no use explaining now!"

"*Mais, Messieurs*——" querulously recommenced the unhappy Margot.

"Hold your tongue," exclaimed Madame Laurent, "you have been disgracing my house."

"*Mais, Madame, écoutez-moi*——"

"No, no," cried the German, "we saw you—we saw you."

"*Mais, Monsieur le Comte*——"

"Fie, fie!" cried the Frenchman.

"*Mais, Monsieur le Vicomte*——"

At this every mouth was opened, and the patience of Monsieur Margot being by this time exhausted, he flew into a violent rage; his tormentors pretended an equal indignation, and at length he fought his way out of the room, as fast as his shattered bones would allow him, followed by the whole body, screaming, and shouting, and scolding, and laughing after him.

The next morning passed without my usual lesson from Monsieur Margot; that was natural enough; but when the next day, and the next, rolled on, and brought neither Monsieur Margot nor his excuse, I began to be uneasy for the poor man. Accordingly I sent to Madame Laurent's to inquire after him: judge of my surprise at hearing that he had, early the day after his adventure, left his lodgings with his small possession of books and clothes, leaving only a note to Madame Laurent,

enclosing the amount of his debt to her, and that none had since seen or heard of him.

From that day to this I have never once beheld him. The poor professor

lost even the little money due to him for his lessons—so true is it, that in a man of Monsieur Margot's temper even interest is a subordinate passion to vanity !

CHAPTER XVIII.

It is good to be merry and wise,
It's good to be honest and true ;
It is good to be off with the old love,
Before you be on with the new.—*Song.*

ONE morning, when I was riding to the *Bois de Boulogne*, (the celebrated place of assignation), in order to meet Madame d'Anville, I saw a lady on horseback, in the most imminent danger of being thrown. Her horse had taken fright at an English tandem, or its driver, and was plunging violently ; the lady was evidently much frightened, and lost her presence of mind more and more every moment. A man who was with her, and who could scarcely manage his own horse, appeared to be exceedingly desirous, but perfectly unable, to assist her ; and a great number of people were looking on, doing nothing, and saying, "*Mon Dieu*, how dangerous !"

I have always had a great horror of being a hero in scenes, and a still greater antipathy to "*females in distress*." However, so great is the effect of sympathy upon the most hardened of us, that I stopped for a few moments, first to look on, and secondly to assist. Just when a moment's delay might have been dangerous, I threw myself off my horse, seized her's with one hand, by the rein which she no longer had the strength to hold, and assisted her with the other to dismount. When all the peril was over, Monsieur, her companion, managed also to find his legs ; and I did not, I confess, wonder at his previous delay, when I discovered that the lady in danger had

been his wife. He gave me a profusion of thanks, and she made them more than complimentary by the glance which accompanied them. Their carriage was in attendance at a short distance behind. The husband went for it—I remained with the lady.

"Mr. Pelham," she said, "I have heard much of you from my friend Madame d'Anville, and have long been anxious for your acquaintance. I did not think I should commence it with so great an obligation."

Flattered by being already known by name, and a subject of previous interest, you may be sure that I tried every method to improve the opportunity I had gained ; and when I handed my new acquaintance into her carriage, my pressure of her hand was somewhat more than slightly returned.

"Shall you be at the English ambassador's to-night?" said the lady, as they were about to shut the door of the carriage.

"Certainly, if *you* are to be there," was my answer.

"We shall meet then," said Madame, and her look said more.

I rode into the *Bois* ; and giving my horse to my servant, as I came near *Passy*, where I was to meet Madame d'Anville, I proceeded thither on foot. I was just in sight of the spot, and indeed of my *inamorata*,

when two men passed, talking very earnestly; they did not remark me, but what individual could ever escape my notice? The one was Thornton; the other—who could he be? Where had I seen that pale and remarkable countenance before? I looked again. I was satisfied that I was mistaken in my first thought; the hair was of a completely different colour. “No, no,” said I, “it is not he: yet how like!”

I was *distract* and absent during the whole time I was with Madame d’Anville. The face of Thornton’s companion haunted me like a dream; and, to say the truth, there were also moments when the recollection of my new engagement for the evening made me tired with that which I was enjoying the troublesome honour of keeping.

Madame d’Anville was not slow in perceiving the coldness of my behaviour. Though a Frenchwoman, she was rather grieved than resentful.

“You are growing tired of me, my friend,” she said; “and when I consider your youth and temptations, I cannot be surprised at it—yet, I own, that this thought gives me much greater pain than I could have supposed.”

“Bah! *ma belle amie*,” cried I, “you deceive yourself—I adore you—I shall always adore you; but it’s getting very late!”

Madame d’Anville sighed, and we parted. “She is not half so pretty or agreeable as she was,” thought I, as I mounted my horse, and remembered my appointment at the ambassador’s.

I took unusual pains with my appearance that evening, and drove to the ambassador’s hotel in the Rue Faubourg St. Honoré, full half an hour earlier than I had ever done before. I had been some time in the rooms without discovering my heroine of the morning. The Duchess of H— n passed by.

“What a wonderfully beautiful

woman!” said Mr. Howard de Howard, a lean gentleman, who valued himself on his ancestors, to Mr. Aberton.

“Ay,” answered Aberton, “but to my taste, the Duchesse de Perpignan is quite equal to her—do you know her?”

“No—yes!” said Mr. Howard de Howard; “that is, not exactly—not well.” An Englishman never owns that he does not know a duchess.

“Hem!” said Mr. Aberton, thrusting his large hand through his lank light hair. “Hem—could one do any thing, do you think, in that quarter?”

“I should think *one* might, with a tolerable person!” answered the spectral aristocrat, looking down at a pair of most shadowy supporters.

“Pray,” said Aberton, “what do you think of Miss ——? they say she is an heiress.”

“Think of her!” said Mr. Howard de Howard, who was as poor as he was thin, “why, I *have* thought of her!”

“They say that fool Pelham makes up to her.” (Little did Mr. Aberton imagine, when he made this remark, that I was close behind him.)

“I should not imagine that was true,” said the secretary; “he is so occupied with Madame d’Anville.”

“Pooh!” said Aberton, dictatorially, “*she* never had any thing to say to him.”

“Why are you so sure?” said Mr. Howard de Howard.

“Why—because he never showed any notes from her, nor ever even said he had a *liaison* with her!”

“Ah! that is quite enough!” said Mr. Howard de Howard. “But, is not that the Duchesse de Perpignan?”

Mr. Aberton turned, and so did I—our eyes met—his fell—well they might, after his courteous epithet to my name; however, I had far too good an opinion of myself to care one straw about his; besides, at that moment, I was wholly lost in my surprise

and pleasure, in finding that this Duchesse de Perpignan was no other than my acquaintance of the morning. She caught my gaze and smiled as she bowed. "Now," thought I, as I approached her, "let us see if we cannot eclipse Mr. Aberton."

All love-making is just the same, and, therefore, I shall spare the reader my conversation that evening. When he recollects that it was Henry Pelham who was the gallant, I am persuaded that he will be pretty certain as to the success.

CHAPTER XIX.

*Alea sequa vorax species certissima furti
Non contenta bonis, animum quoque perfida mergit ;—
Furca, furax—Infamis, iners. Furiosa, ruina.*—PETR. Dial.*

I DINED the next day at the Frères Provençaux; an excellent restaurateur's, by-the-by, where one gets irreproachable *gibier*, and meets few English.† After dinner, I strolled into the various gambling-houses, with which the Palais Royal abounds.

In one of these the crowd and heat were so great, that I should immediately have retired if I had not been struck with the intense expression of interest in the countenance of one of the spectators at the *rouge et noir* table. He was a man about forty years of age; his complexion was dark and sallow; the features prominent, and what are generally called handsome; but there was a certain sinister expression in his eyes and mouth, which rendered the effect of his physiognomy rather disagreeable than prepossessing. At a small distance from him, and playing, with an air which, in its carelessness and *nonchalance*, formed a remarkable contrast to the painful anxiety of the

man I have just described, sate Mr Thornton.

At first sight, these two appeared to be the only Englishmen present beside myself; I was more struck by seeing the former in that scene than I was at meeting Thornton there; for there was something distinguished in the mien of the stranger, which suited far worse with the appearance of the place, than the air and dress of my *ci-devant* second.

"What! another Englishman?" thought I, as I turned round and perceived a thick, rough great coat, which could possibly belong to no continental shoulders. The wearer was standing directly opposite the seat of the swarthy stranger; his hat was slouched over his face; I moved in order to get a clearer view of his countenance. It was the same person I had seen with Thornton that morning. Never to this moment have I forgotten the stern and ferocious expression with which he was gazing upon the keen and agitated features of the gambler opposite. In the eye and lip there was neither pleasure, hatred, nor scorn, in their simple and unalloyed elements; but each seemed blent and mingled into one deadly concentration of evil passions.

* *Gaming, that direst felon of the breast,
Steals more than fortune from its
wretched thrall,*

Spreads o'er the soul the inert devouring pest,

*And graves, and rots, and taints,
and ruins all.—PARAPHRASE.*

† Mr. Pelham could not say as much for the Frères Provençaux at present.

This man neither played, nor spoke, nor moved. He appeared utterly insensible of every feeling in common with those around. There he stood, wrapped in his own dark and inscrutable thoughts, never, for one instant, taking his looks from the varying countenance which did not observe their gaze, nor altering the withering character of their almost demoniacal expression. I could not tear myself from the spot. I felt chained by some mysterious and undefinable interest; my attention was first diverted into a new channel, by a loud exclamation from the dark-visaged gambler at the table; it was the first he had uttered, notwithstanding his anxiety; and, from the deep, thrilling tone in which it was expressed, it conveyed a keen sympathy with the overcharged feelings which it burst from.

With a trembling hand, he took from an old purse the few Napoleons that were still left there. He set them all at one hazard on the *rouge*. He hung over the table with a dropping lip; his hands were tightly clasped in each other; his nerves seemed strained into the last agony

of excitement. I ventured to raise my eyes upon the gaze, which I *felt* must still be upon the gambler—there it was fixed, and stern as before!—but it now conveyed a deeper expression of joy than it had hitherto assumed; yet a joy so malignant and fiendish, that no look of mere anger or hatred could have equally chilled my heart. I dropped my eyes. I redoubled my attention to the cards—the last two were to be turned up. A moment more!—the fortune was to the *noir*. The stranger had lost! He did not utter a single word. He looked with a vacant eye on the long mace, with which the marker had swept away his last hopes, with his last coin, and then, rising, left the room, and disappeared.

The other Englishman was not long in following him. He uttered a short, low, laugh, unheard, perhaps, by any one but myself; and, pushing through the atmosphere of *sacrés!* and *mille tonnerres!* which filled that pandemonium, strode quickly to the door. I felt as if a load had been taken from my bosom, when he was gone.

CHAPTER XX.

Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.—HOR. Ars Poet.*

I WAS loitering over my breakfast the next morning, and thinking of the last night's scene, when Lord Vincent was announced.

"How fares the gallant Pelham?" said he, as he entered the room.

"Why, to say the truth," I replied, "I am rather under the influence of blue devils this morning, and your visit is like a sun-beam in November."

"A bright thought," said Vincent, "and I shall make you a very pretty little poet soon; publish you in a neat octavo, and dedicate you to Lady D——e. Pray, by-the-by, have you ever read her plays? You know they were only privately printed?"

"No," said I, (for in good truth, had his lordship interrogated me touching any other literary production, I should have esteemed it a part of my present character to return the same answer).

"No!" repeated Vincent; "permit me to tell you, that you must never seem ignorant of any work *not* published. To be admired, one must always know what other people don't—and then one has full liberty to sneer at the value of what other people *do* know. Renounce the threshold of knowledge. There, every new proselyte can meet you. Boast of your acquaintance with the sanctum, and not one in ten thousand can dispute it with you. Have you read Monsieur de C——'s pamphlet?"

"Really," said I, "I have been so busy!"

* *The appropriate justice sorts each shade and hue,
And gives to each the exact proportion due.*—PARAPHRASE.

"Ah, *mon ami!*" cried Vincent, "the greatest sign of an idle man is to complain of being busy. But you have had a loss: the pamphlet is good. C——, by the way, has an extraordinary, though not an expanded mind: it is like a citizen's garden near London; a pretty parterre here, and a Chinese pagoda there; an oak tree in one corner, and a mushroom bed in the other: and above all, a Gothic Ruin opposite the bay-window! You may traverse the whole in a stride; it is the four quarters of the globe in a mole-hill. Yet everything is good in its kind; and is neither without elegance nor design in its arrangement."

"What do you think," said I, "of the Baron de ——, the minister of ——?"

"Of him!" replied Vincent—

'His soul
Still sits at squat, and peeps not from its
hole.'

It is dark and bewildered—full of dim visions of the ancient *régime*;—it is a bat hovering about the cells of an old abbey. Poor, *antique* little soul! but I will say nothing more about it—

'For who would be satirical
Upon a thing so very small'

as the soul of the Baron de ——!"

Finding Lord Vincent so disposed to the biting mood, I immediately directed his *rabies* towards Mr. Aberton.

"Aberton," said Vincent, in answer to my question, if he knew that amiable young gentleman—"Yes! a sort of man who, speaking of the best society, says *we*—who sticks his *best*

caras on his chimney-piece, and writes himself *billets-doux* from duchesses. A duodecimo of 'precious conceits,' bound in calf-skin—I know the man well; does he not dress decently, Pelham?"

"His clothes *are* well made," said I, candidly.

"Ah!" said Vincent, "I should think he went to the best tailor, and said, 'Give me a collar like Lord So and So's,'; one who would not dare to have a new waistcoat till it had been authoritatively patronised, and who took his fashions, like his follies, from the best proficient. Such fellows are always too ashamed of themselves not to be proud of their clothes;—like the Chinese mariners, they burn incense *before the needle!*"

"And Mr. Howard de Howard," said I, laughing, "what do you think of him?"

"What! the thin Eupatrid?" cried Vincent. "He is the mathematical definition of a straight line—*length without breadth*. His inseparable friend, Mr. Aberton, was running up the Rue St. Honoré yesterday in order to catch him, and when I saw him chasing that meagre apparition, I said to Bennington, 'I have found out the real Peter Schlemil!' 'Whom?' (asked his grave lordship, with serious *naïveté*)—'Mr. Aberton,' said I; 'don't you see him *running after his shadow?*' But the pride of the lean thing is so amusing! He is fifteenth cousin to the duke, and so his favourite exordium is, 'Whenever I succeed to the titles of my ancestors.' It was but the other day, that he heard two or three silly young men discussing church and state, and they began by talking irreligion—(Mr. Howard de Howard is too unsubstantial not to be spiritually inclined)—however he only fidgeted in his chair. They then proceeded to be exceedingly disloyal. Mr. Howard de Howard fidgeted again. They then passed

to vituperations on the aristocracy;—this the attenuated pomposity (*magni nominis umbra*) could brook no longer. He rose up, cast a severe look on the abashed youths, and thus addressed them—'Gentlemen, I have sate by in silence, and heard my King derided, and my God blasphemed; but now when you attack the aristocracy, I can no longer refrain from noticing so obviously intentional an insult. *You have become personal!*'"

"Pray, Vincent," said I, after a short pause, "did you ever meet with a Mr. Thornton at Paris?"

"Thornton, Thornton," said Vincent, musingly; "what, Tom Thornton?"

"I should think, very likely," I replied; "just the sort of man who would be Tom Thornton—has a broad face, with a colour, and wears a spotted neckcloth; Tom—what could his name be but Tom?"

"Is he about five-and-thirty?" asked Vincent, "rather short, and with reddish-coloured hair and whiskers?"

"Precisely," said I; "are not all Toms alike?"

"Ah," said Vincent, "I know him well: he is a clever, shrewd fellow, but a most unmitigated rascal. He is the son of a steward in Lancashire, and received an attorney's education, but being a humorous, noisy fellow, he became a great favourite with his father's employer, who was a sort of Mæcenas to cudgel players, boxers, and horse-jockeys. At his house, Thornton met many persons of rank, but of a taste similar to their host's: and they, mistaking his vulgar coarseness for honesty, and his quaint proverbs for wit, admitted him into their society. It was with one of them that I have seen him. I believe of late, that his character has been of a very indifferent odour: and whatever has brought him among the English at Paris—those white-washed abominations—those 'innocent blacknesses,' as

Charles Lamb calls chimney-sweepers, it does not argue well for his professional occupations. I should think however, that he manages to *live* here; for wherever there are English fools, there are fine pickings for an English rogue."

"Ay," said I, "but are there enough fools here to feed the rogues?"

"Yes, because rogues are like spiders, and eat each other, when there is nothing else to catch; and Tom Thornton is safe, as long as the ordi-

nary law of nature lasts, that the greater knave preys on the lesser,—for there cannot possibly be a greater knave than he is! If you have made his acquaintance, my dear Pelham, I advise you most soberly to look to yourself, for if he doth not steal, beg, or borrow of you, Mr. Howard de Howard will grow fat, and even Mr. Aberton cease to be a fool. And now, most noble Pelham, farewell. *Il est plus aisé d'être sage pour les autres que de l'être pour soi-même.*"*

CHAPTER XXI.

This is a notable couple—and have met

But for some secret knavery.—*The Tanner of Tyburn.*

I HAD now been several weeks in Paris, and I was not altogether dissatisfied with the manner in which they had been spent. I had enjoyed myself to the utmost, while I had, as much as possible, combined profit with pleasure; viz., if I went to the Opera in the evening, I learned to dance in the morning; if I drove to a *soirée* at the Duchesse de Perpignan's, it was not till I had fenced an hour at the *Salon des Assauts d'Armes*; in short, I took the greatest pains to complete my education.—I wish all young men who frequented the Continent for that purpose could say the same!

One day (about a week after the conversation with Vincent, recorded in my last chapter) I was walking slowly along one of the paths in the *Jardin des Plantes*, meditating upon the various excellencies of the *Rocher de Cancale* and the Duchesse de Perpignan, when I perceived a tall man, with a thick, rough coat, of a dark colour (which I recognised long before I did the face of the wearer) emerging from an intersecting path. He

stopped a few moments, and looked round as if expecting some one. Presently a woman, apparently about thirty, and meanly dressed, appeared in an opposite direction. She approached him; they exchanged a few words, and then, the woman taking his arm, they struck into another path, and were soon out of sight. I suppose that the reader has already discovered that this man was Thornton's companion in the *Bois de Boulogne* and the hero of the gaming-house, in the *Palais Royal*. I could not have supposed that so noble a countenance, even in its frowns, could ever have wasted its smiles upon a mistress of the low station to which the woman who had met him evidently belonged. However, we all have our little foibles, as the Frenchman said, when he boiled his grandmother's head in a pipkin.

I myself was, at that time, the sort of person that is always taken by a pretty face, however coarse may be

* *It is more easy to be wise for others than for oneself.*

the garments which set it off; and although I cannot say that I ever stooped so far as to become amorous of a chambermaid, yet I could be tolerably lenient to any man under thirty who did. As a proof of this gentleness of disposition, ten minutes after I had witnessed so unsuitable a *rencontre*, I found myself following a pretty little *grisette* into a small sort of *cabaret*, which was, at the time I speak of (and most probably still is), in the midst of the gardens. I sat down, and called for my favourite drink of lemonade; the little *grisette*, who was with an old woman, possibly her mother, and *un beau gros garçon*, probably her lover, sat opposite, and began, with all the ineffable coquetties of her country, to divide her attention between the said *garçon* and myself. Poor fellow, he seemed to be very little pleased by the significant glances exchanged over his right shoulder, and at last, under pretence of screening her from the draught of the opened window, placed himself exactly between us. This, however ingenious, did not at all answer his expectations; for he had not sufficiently taken into consideration, that I also was endowed with the power of locomotion; accordingly I shifted my chair about three feet, and entirely defeated the countermarch of the enemy.

But this flirtation did not last long; the youth and the old woman appeared very much of the same opinion as to its impropriety; and accordingly, like experienced generals, resolved to conquer by a retreat; they drank up their orgat—paid for it—placed the wavering regiment in the middle, and quitted the field. I was not, however, of a disposition to break my heart at such an occurrence, and I remained by the window, drinking my lemonade, and muttering to myself, "After all, women are a bore!"

On the outside of the *cabaret*, and just under my window, was a bench,

which, for a certain number of *sous*, one might appropriate to the entire and unparticipated use of one's self and party. An old woman (so at least I suppose by her voice, for I did not give myself the trouble of looking,—though, indeed as to that matter, it might have been the shrill treble of Mr. Howard de Howard!) had been hitherto engrossing this settlement with some gallant or other. In Paris, no woman is too old to get an *amant*, either by love or money. This couple soon paired off, and was immediately succeeded by another. The first tones of the man's voice, low as they were, made me start from my seat. I cast one quick glance before I resumed it. The new pair were the Englishman I had before noted in the garden, and the female companion who had joined him.

"Two hundred pounds, you say?" muttered the man; "we must have it all."

"But," returned the woman, in the same whispered voice, "he says, that he will never touch another card."

The man laughed. "Fool," said he, "the passions are not so easily quelled—how many days is it since he had this remittance from England?"

"About three," replied the woman.

"And is it absolutely the very last remnant of his property?"

"The last."

"I am then to understand, that when this is spent there is nothing between him and beggary?"

"Nothing," said the woman, with a half sigh.

The man laughed again, and then rejoined in an altered tone, "Then, then will this parching thirst be quenched at last. I tell you, woman, that it is many months since I have known a day—night—hour, in which my life has been as the life of other men. My whole soul has been melted down into one burning, burning thought. Feel this hand—ay, you

may well start—but what is the fever of the frame to that within?"

Here the voice sank so low as to be inaudible. The woman seemed as if endeavouring to soothe him; at length she said—

"But poor Tyrrell—you will not, surely, suffer him to starve, to die of actual want, abandoned and alone!"

"Alone! no!" cried her companion, fiercely. "When the last agonies shall be upon that man—when, sick with weariness, pain, disease, hunger, he lies down to die—when the death-gurgle is in the throat, and the eye winks beneath the last dull film—when remembrance peoples the chamber with Hell, and his cowardice

would falter forth its dastard recantation to Heaven—*then—may I be there!*"

There was a long pause, only broken by the woman's sobs, which she appeared endeavouring to stifle. At last the man rose, and in a tone so soft that it seemed literally like music, addressed her in the most endearing terms. She soon yielded to their persuasion, and replied to them with interest.

"Spite of the stings of my remorse," she said, "as long as I lose not you, I will lose life, honour, hope, ever soul itself!"

They both quitted the spot as she said this.

CHAPTER XXII.

At length the treacherous snare was laid,
Poor pug was caught—to town convey'd;
There sold. How envied was his doom,
Made captive in a lady's room!—GAY'S *Fables*.

I WAS sitting alone a morning or two after this adventure, when Bédos, entering, announced *une dame*.

This *dame* was a fine tall thing, dressed out like a print in the *Magasin des Modes*. She sat herself down, threw up her veil, and, after a momentary pause, asked me if I liked my apartment?

"Very much," said I, somewhat surprised at the nature of the interrogatory.

"Perhaps you would wish it altered in some way?" rejoined the lady.

"*Non—mille remerciemens!*" said I—"you are very good to be so interested in my accommodation."

"Those curtains might be better arranged—that sofa replaced with a more elegant one," continued my new superintendant.

"Really," said I, "I am too, too much flattered. Perhaps you would

like to have my rooms altogether; if so, make at least no scruple of saying it."

"Oh, no," replied the lady, "I have no objection to your staying here."

"You are too kind," said I, with a low bow.

There was a pause of some moments—I took advantage of it.

"I think, madame, I have the honour of speaking to—to—to—"

"The mistress of the hotel," said the lady, quietly. "I merely called to ask you how you did, and hope you were well accommodated."

"Rather late, considering I have been six weeks in the house," thought I, revolving in my mind various reports I had heard of my present visitor's disposition to gallantry. However, seeing it was all over with me, I resigned myself, with the patience of a martyr, to the fate that I foresaw.

rose, approached her chair, took her hand (very hard and thin it was too), and thanked her with a most affectionate squeeze.

"I have seen much English!" said the lady, for the first time speaking in our language.

"Ah!" said I, giving another squeeze.

"You are a handsome *garçon*," renewed the lady.

"I am so," I replied.

At that moment Bedos entered, and whispered that Madame d'Anville was in the ante-room.

"Good Heavens!" said I, knowing her jealousy of disposition, "what is to be done? Oblige me, madame," seizing the unfortunate mistress of the hotel, and opening the door to the back entrance—"There" said I, "you can easily escape. *Bon jour*."

Hardly had I closed the door, and put the key in my pocket, before Madame d'Anville entered.

"Is it by your order that your servant keeps me waiting in your ante-room?" said she, haughtily.

I endeavoured to make my peace; but all my complaisance was in vain—she was jealous of my intimacy with the Duchesse de Perpignan and glad of any excuse to vent her pique. Fortunately, however, she was going to the Luxembourg; and my only chance of soothing her anger was to accompany her.

Down stairs, therefore, we went, and drove to the Luxembourg; I gave Bedos, before my departure, various little commissions, and told him he need not be at home till the evening. Long before the expiration of an hour, Madame d'Anville's ill humour had given me an excuse for affecting it myself. Tired to death of her, and panting for release, I took a high tone—complained of her ill-temper, and her want of love—spoke rapidly—waited for no reply, and, leaving her at the Luxembourg, proceeded forthwith

to Galignani's, like a man just delivered from a strait waistcoat.

Leave me now, for a few minutes, in the reading-room at Galignani's, and return to the mistress of the hotel, whom I had so unceremoniously thrust out of my salon. The passage into which she had been put communicated by one door with my rooms, and by another with the staircase. Now, it so happened, that Bedos was in the habit of locking the latter door, and keeping the key; the other egress, it will be remembered, I myself had secured; so that the unfortunate mistress of the hotel was no sooner turned into this passage, than she found herself in a sort of dungeon, ten feet by five, and surrounded, like Eve in Paradise, by a whole creation—not of birds, beasts, and fishes, but of brooms, brushes, linen for the laundress, and—a wood basket! What she was to do in this dilemma was utterly inconceivable; scream, indeed, she might, but then the shame and ridicule of being discovered in so equivocal a situation, were somewhat more than our discreet landlady could endure. Besides, such an *exposé* might be attended with a loss the good woman valued more than reputation, viz., lodgers; for the possessors of the two best floors were both Englishwomen of a certain rank; and my landlady had heard such accounts of our national virtue, that she feared an instantaneous emigration of such inveterate prudes, if her screams and situation reached their ears.

Quietly then, and soberly, did the good lady sit, eyeing the brooms and brushes as they grew darker and darker with the approach of the evening, and consoling herself with the certainty that her release must eventually take place.

Meanwhile, to return to myself—I found Lord Vincent at Galignani's, carefully looking over "Choice Extracts from the best English Authors."

"Ah, my good fellow!" said he, "I am delighted to see you: I made such a capital quotation just now: the young Benningtons were drowning a poor devil of a puppy; the youngest (to whom the mother belonged) looked on with a grave, earnest face, till the last kick was over, and then burst into tears. 'Why do you cry so?' said I. 'Because it was so cruel in us to drown the poor puppy!' replied the juvenile Philocunos. 'Pooh!' said I; 'Quid juvat errores mersâ jam puppe fateri?' Was it not good?—you remember it in Claudian, eh, Pelham? Think of its being thrown away on those Latinless young lubbers! Have you seen anything of Mr. Thornton lately?"

"No," said I, "I've not; but I am determined to have that pleasure soon."

"You will do as you please," said Vincent, "but you will be like the child playing with edged tools."

"I am not a child," said I, "so the simile is not good. He must be the devil himself, or a Scotchman at least, to take me in."

Vincent shook his head. "Come and dine with me at the Rocher," said he; "we are a party of six—choice spirits all."

"Volontiers; but we can stroll in the Tuileries first, if you have no other engagement."

"None," said Vincent, putting his arm in mine.

After an hour's walk, Vincent suddenly recollected that he had a commission of a very important nature in the Rue J. J. Rousseau. This was—to buy a monkey. "It is for Wormwood," said he, "who has written me a long letter, describing its qualities and qualifications. I suppose he wants it for some practical joke—some embodied bitterness—Heaven forbid I should thwart him in so charitable a design!"

"Amen," said I; and we proceeded together to the monkey-fancier. After

much deliberation, we at last decided upon the most hideous animal I ever beheld—it was of a—no, I will not attempt to describe it—it would be quite impossible! Vincent was so delighted with our choice, that he insisted upon carrying it away immediately.

"Is it quite quiet?" I asked.

"Comme un oiseau," said the man.

We called a *fiacre*—paid for monsieur Jocko, and drove to Vincent's apartments; there we found, however, that his valet had gone out and taken the key.

"Hang it," said Vincent, "it does not signify! We'll carry *le petit-monsieur* with us to the Rocher."

Accordingly we all three once more entered the *fiacre*, and drove to the celebrated restaurateur's of the Rue Mont Orgueil. O, blissful recollections of that dinner! how at this moment you crowd upon my delighted remembrance! Lonely and sorrowful as I now sit, digesting with many a throe the iron thews of a British beef-steak—more *Anglico*—immeasurably tough—I see the grateful apparitions of *Escallops de Saumon* and *Laitances de Carpes* rise in a gentle vapour before my eyes! breathing a sweet and pleasant odour, and contrasting the dream-like delicacies of their hue and aspect, with the dire and dure realities which now weigh so heavily on the region below my heart! And thou, most beautiful of all—thou evening star of *entremets*—thou that delightest in truffles, and gloriest in a dark cloud of sauces—exquisite *foie gras*!—Have I forgotten thee? Do I not, on the contrary, see thee—smell thee—taste thee—and almost die with rapture of thy possession? What, though the goose, of which thou art a part, has, indeed, been roasted alive by a slow fire, in order to increase thy divine proportions—yet has not our *Almanach*—the *Almanach des Gourmands*—truly declared that the goose re-

joined amid all her tortures—because of the glory that awaited her? Did she not, in prophetic vision, behold her enlarged and ennobled *foie dilate* into *pâtés* and steam into *sautés*—the companion of truffles—the glory of dishes—the delight—the treasure—the transport of gourmands! O, exalted among birds—apotheosised goose, did not thy heart exult even when thy liver parched and swelled within thee, from that most agonising death; and didst thou not, like the Indian at the stake, triumph in the very torments which alone could render thee illustrious?

After dinner we grew exceedingly merry. Vincent punned and quoted: we laughed and applauded; and our Burgundy went round with an alacrity to which every new joke gave an additional impetus. Monsieur Jocko was by no means the dullest in the party; he cracked his nuts with as much grace as we did our jests, and grinned and chattered as facetiously as the best of us. After coffee we were all so pleased with one another, that we resolved not to separate, and accordingly we adjourned to my rooms, Jocko and all, to find new revelries and grow brilliant over Curaçoa punch.

We entered my salon with a roar, and set Bedos to work at the punch forthwith. Bedos, that Ganyমেদে of a valet, had himself but just arrived, and was unlocking the door as we entered. We soon blew up a glorious fire, and our spirits brightened in proportion. Monsieur Jocko sate on Vincent's knee—"Ne monstrum," as he classically termed it. One of our compotatores was playing with it. Jocko grew suddenly in earnest—a grin—a scratch, and a bite, were the work of a moment.

"Ne quid nimis—now," said Vincent, gravely, instead of endeavouring to soothe the afflicted party, who grew into a towering passion. Nothing but Jocko's absolute disgrace could indeed

have saved his life from the vengeance of the sufferer.

"Whither shall we banish him?" said Vincent.

"Oh," I replied, "put him out in that back passage; the outer door is shut; he'll be quite safe;" and to the passage he was therefore immediately consigned.

It was in this place, the reader will remember, that the hapless dame du Château was at that very instant in "durance vile." Unconscious of this fact, I gave Bedos the key, he took the condemned monkey, opened the door, thrust Jocko in, and closed it again. Meanwhile we resumed our merriment.

"Nunc est bibendum," said Vincent, as Bedos placed the punch on the table. "Give us a toast, Dartmore."

Lord Dartmore was a young man, with tremendous spirits, which made up for wit. He was just about to reply, when a loud shriek was heard from Jocko's place of banishment: a sort of scramble ensued, and the next moment the door was thrown violently open, and in rushed the terrified landlady, screaming like a sea-gull, and bearing Jocko aloft upon her shoulders, from which "bad eminence" he was grinning and chattering with the fury of fifty devils. She ran twice round the room, and then sank on the floor in hysterics, feigned or real. We lost no time in hastening to her assistance; but the warlike Jocko, still sitting upon her, refused to permit one of us to approach. There he sat, turning from side to side, showing his sharp, white teeth, and uttering from time to time the most menacing and diabolical sounds.

"What the deuce shall we do?" cried Dartmore.

"Do?" said Vincent, who was convulsed with laughter, and yet endeavouring to speak gravely; "why, watch like L. Opimius, '*ne quid res publica detrimenti caperet.*'"

"By Jove, Pelham, he will scratch out the lady's *beaux yeux*," cried the good-natured Dartmore, endeavouring to seize the monkey by the tail, for which he very narrowly escaped with an unmutilated visage. But the man who had before suffered by Joeko's ferocity, and whose breast was still swelling with revenge, was glad of so favourable an opportunity and excuse for wreaking it. He seized the poker, made three strides to Joeko, who set up an ineffable cry of defiance—and with a single blow split the skull of the unhappy monkey in twain. It fell with one convulsion on the ground and gave up the ghost.

We then raised the unfortunate landlady, placed her on the sofa, and Dartmore administered a plentiful potation of the Curaçoa punch. By slow degrees she revived, gave three most doleful suspirations, and then, starting up, gazed wildly around her. Half of us were still laughing—my unfortunate self among the number ; this the enraged landlady no sooner

perceived than she imagined herself the victim of some preconcerted villany. Her lips trembled with passion—she uttered the most dreadful imprecations ; and had I not retired into a corner, and armed myself with the dead body of Joeko, which I wielded with exceeding valour, she might, with the simple weapons with which nature had provided her hands, have for ever demolished the loves and graces that abide in the face of Henry Pelham.

When at last she saw that nothing hostile was at present to be effected, she drew herself up, and giving Bedos a tremendous box on the ear, as he stood grinning beside her, marched out of the room.

We then again rallied around the table, more than ever disposed to be brilliant, and kept up till day-break a continued fire of jests upon the heroine of the passage : "*cum quâ* (as Vincent happily observed) *clauditur adversis innoxia simia fatis !*"

CHAPTER XXIII.

Show me not thy painted beauties,
These impostures I defy.—GEORGE WITHERS.

The cave of Falri smelt not more delicately ;—on every side appeared the marks of drunkenness and gluttony. At the upper end of the cave the sorcerer lay extended, &c.

Mirglip the Persian, in the Tales of the Genii.

I WOKE the next morning with an aching head and feverish frame. Ah, those midnight carousals, how glorious they would be if there were *no* next morning ! I took my *sauterne* and soda-water in my dressing-room : and, as indisposition always makes me meditative, I thought over all I had done since my arrival at Paris. I had become (*that*, Heaven knows, I *soon* manage to do) rather a talked-of and noted character. It is true that I was everywhere abused—one found fault with my neckcloth—another with my mind—the lank Mr. Aberton declared that I put my hair in papers, and the stuffed Sir Henry Millington said I was a thread-paper myself. One blamed my riding—a second my dancing—a third wondered how any woman *could* like me, and a fourth said that no woman *ever* could.

On one point, however, all—friends and foes—were alike agreed : viz., that I was a consummate puppy, and excessively well satisfied with myself. Perhaps, they were not much mistaken there. Why is it, by-the-by, that to be pleased with one's-self is the surest way of offending everybody else ? If any one, male or female, an evident admirer of his or her own perfections, enter a room, how perturbed, restless, and unhappy every individual of the offender's sex instantly becomes : for them not only enjoyment but tranquillity is over, and if they could annihilate the unconscious victim of their spleen, I

fully believe no Christian toleration would come in the way of that last extreme of animosity. For a coxcomb there is no mercy—for a coquette no pardon. They are, as it were, the dissenters of society—no crime is too bad to be imputed to them ; they do not believe the religion of others—they set up a deity of their own vanity—all the orthodox vanities of others are offended. Then comes the bigotry—the stake—the *auto-da-fê* of scandal. What, alas ! is so implacable as the rage of vanity ! What so restless as its persecution ! Take from a man his fortune, his house, his reputation, but flatter his vanity in each, and he will forgive you. Heap upon him benefits, fill him with blessings : but irritate his self-love, and you have made the very best man ungrateful. He will sting you if he can : you cannot blame him ; you yourself have instilled the venom. This is one reason why you must rarely reckon upon gratitude in conferring an obligation. It is a very high mind to which gratitude is not a painful sensation. If you wish to please, you will find it wiser to receive—solicit even—favours, than accord them : for the vanity of the *obligor* is always flattered—that of the *obligee* rarely.

Well, this is an unforeseen digression : let me return ! I had mixed, of late, very little with the English. My mother's introductions had procured me the *entrée* of the best French

houses; and to them, therefore, my evenings were usually devoted. Alas! that was a happy time, when my carriage used to await me at the door of the Rocher de Caneale, and then whirl me to a succession of visits, varying in their degree and nature as the whim prompted: now to the brilliant *soirées* of Madame de —, or to the *appartement au troisième* of some less celebrated daughter of dissipation and *coarté*;—now to the literary conversations of the Duchess de D—, or the Vicomte d—, and then to the feverish excitement of the gambling house. Passing from each with the appetite for amusement kept alive by variety; finding in none a disappointment, and in every one a welcome; full of the health which supports, and the youth which colours all excess or excitement, I drained, with an unsparing lip, whatever enjoyment that enchanting metropolis could afford.

I have hitherto said but little of the Duchesse de Perpignan; I think it necessary now to give some account of that personage. Ever since the evening I had met her at the ambassador's, I paid her the most unceasing attentions. I soon discovered that she had a curious sort of *liaison* with one of the *attachés*—a short ill-made gentleman, with high shoulders and a pale face, who wore a blue coat and buff waistcoat, wrote bad verses, and thought himself handsome. All Paris said she was excessively enamoured of this youth. As for me, I had not known her four days before I discovered that she could not be excessively enamoured of anything but an oyster *pâté* and Lord Byron's Corsair. Her mind was the most marvellous *mélange* of sentiment and its opposite. In her amours she was Lucretia herself; in her epicurism Apicius would have yielded to her. She was pleased with sighs, but she adored suppers. She would leave everything for her

lover, except her dinner. The *attaché* soon quarrelled with her, and I was installed into the platonic honours of his office.

At first, I own that I was flattered by her choice, and though she was terribly exacting of my *petits soins*, I managed to keep up her affection, and, what is still more wonderful, my own, for the better part of a month. What then cooled me was the following occurrence:—

I was in her *boudoir* one evening, when her *femme de chambre* came to tell us that the Duc was in the passage. Notwithstanding the innocence of our attachment, the Duchesse was in a violent fright: a small door was at the left of the ottoman, on which we were sitting. "Oh, no, no, not there," cried the lady; but I, who saw no other refuge, entered it forthwith, and before she could ferret me out, the Duc was in the room.

In the meanwhile, I amused myself by examining the wonders of the new world into which I had so abruptly immersed: on a small table before me, was deposited a remarkably constructed night-cap; I examined it as a curiosity; on each side was placed *une petite coquette de veau cru*, sewed on with green-coloured silk (I remember even the smallest minutiae); a beautiful golden wig (the Duchesse never liked me to play with her hair) was on a block close by, and another table was a set of teeth, *d'une blancheur éblouissante*. In this manufactory of a beauty I remained for a quarter of an hour: at the end of that time, the abigail (the Duchesse had the grace to disappear) released me, and I flew down stairs like a spirit from purgatory.

From that moment the Duchesse honoured me with her most deadly abhorrence. Equally silly and wicked, her schemes of revenge were as ludicrous in their execution as remorseless in their design: at one time I

✓ narrowly escaped poison in a cup of coffee—at another, she endeavoured to stab me to the heart with a paper cutter.

Notwithstanding my preservation from these attacks, my fair enemy had resolved on my destruction, and another means of attempting it still remained, which the reader will yet have the pleasure of learning.

Mr. Thornton had called upon me twice, and twice I had returned the visit, but neither of us had been at home to benefit by these reciprocities of politeness. His acquaintance with my mysterious hero of the gambling house and the *Jardin des Plantes*, and the keen interest I took, in spite of myself, in that unaccountable person, whom I was persuaded I had seen before in some very different scene, and under very different circumstances, made me desirous to improve an acquaintance, which, from Vincent's detail, I should otherwise have been anxious to avoid. I therefore resolved to make another attempt to find him at home; and my headache being somewhat better, I took my way to his apartments in the Faubourg St. Germain.

I love that *quartier*!—if ever I go to Paris again I shall reside there. It is a different world from the streets usually known to, and tenanted by the English—*there*, indeed, you are among the French, the fossilised remains of the old *régime*—the very houses have an air of desolate, yet venerable grandeur—you never pass by the white and modern mansion of a *nouveau riche*; all, even to the ruggedness of the *paré*, breathes a haughty disdain of innovation—you cross one of the numerous bridges, and you enter into another time—you are inhaling the atmosphere of a past century; no flaunting *boutique*, French in its trumpery, English in its prices, stares you in the face; no stiff coats and unnatural gaits are seen *angli-*

cising up the melancholy streets. Vast hotels, with their gloomy frontals, and magnificent contempt of comfort: shops, such as shops might have been in the aristocratic days of Louis Quatorze, ere British contamination made them insolent and dear; public edifices, still eloquent of the superb charities of *le grand monarque*—carriages with their huge bodies and ample decorations; horses, with their Norman dimensions and undocked honours; men, on whose more high though not less courteous demeanour, the Revolution seems to have wrought no democratic plebeianism—all strike on the mind with a vague and nameless impression of antiquity; a something solemn even in gaiety, and faded in pomp, appears to linger over all you behold; there are the Great French People unadulterated by change, unsullied with the commerce of the vagrant and various tribes that throng their mighty mart of enjoyments.

The strangers who fill the *quartiers* on this side the Seine pass not there: between them and the Faubourg there is a gulf: the very skies seem different—your own feelings, thoughts—nature itself—alter, when you have passed that Styx which divides the wanderers from the habitants; your spirits are not so much damped, as tinged, refined, ennobled by a certain inexpressible awe—you are girt with the stateliness of eld, and you tread the gloomy streets with the dignity of a man, who is recalling the splendours of an ancient court where he once did homage.*

I arrived at Thornton's chambers in the Rue St. Dominique. "*Monsieur, est il chez lui?*" said I to the ancient portress, who was reading one of Crebillon's novels.

* It was in 1827 that this was first published; the glory (by this time) has probably left the Faubourg.

"*Oui Monsieur, au quatrième,*" was the answer. I turned to the dark and unclean stair-case, and, after incredible exertion and fatigue, arrived, at last, at the elevated abode of Mr. Thornton.

"*Entrez,*" cried a voice, in answer to my rap. I obeyed the signal, and found myself in a room of tolerable dimensions and multiplied utilities. A decayed silk curtain of a dingy blue, drawn across a recess, separated the *chambre à coucher* from the *salon*. It was at present only half drawn, and did not, therefore, conceal the mysteries of the den within; the bed was still unmade, and apparently of no very inviting cleanliness; a red handkerchief, that served as a night-cap, hung pendent from the foot of the bed: at a little distance from it, more towards the pillow, were a shawl, a parasol, and an old slipper. On a table, which stood between the two dull, filmy windows, were placed a cracked bowl, still reeking with the lees of gin-punch, two bottles half full, a mouldy cheese, and a salad dish: on the ground beneath the table lay two huge books, and a woman's bonnet.

Thornton himself sat by a small consumptive fire, in an easy chair; another table, still spread with the appliances of breakfast, viz., a coffee-pot, a milk-jug, two cups, a broken loaf, and an empty dish, mingled with a pack of cards, *one* dice, and an open book *de mauvais goût* stood immediately before him.

Every thing around bore some testimony of low debauchery; and the man himself, with his flushed and sensual countenance, his unwashed hands, and the slovenly rakishness of his whole appearance, made no unfitting representation of the *Genius loci*.

All that I have described, together with a flitting shadow of feminine appearance, escaping through another

door, my quick eye discovered in the same instant that I made my salutation.

Thornton rose, with an air half-careless and half-abashed, and expressed, in more appropriate terms than his appearance warranted, his pleasurable surprise at seeing me at last. There was, however, a singularity in his conversation which gave it an air both of shrewdness and vulgarity. This was, as may before have been noted, a profuse intermixture of proverbs, some stale, some new, some sensible enough, and all savouring of a vocabulary carefully eschewed by every man of ordinary refinement in conversation.

"I have but a small tenement," said he, smiling; "but, thank Heaven, at Paris a man is not made by his lodgings. Small house, small care. Few *garçons* have indeed a more sumptuous apartment than myself."

"True," said I; "and if I may judge by the bottles on the opposite table, and the bonnet beneath it, you find that no abode is too humble or too exalted for the solace of the senses."

"Fore Gad, you are in the right, Mr. Pelham," replied Thornton, with a loud, coarse, chuckling laugh, which, more than a year's conversation could have done, let me into the secrets of his character. "I care not a rush for the decorations of the table, so that the cheer be good; nor for the gew-gaws of the head-dress, so long as the face is pretty—'the taste of the kitchen is better than the smell.' Do you go much to Madame B——'s in the Rue Grétry—eh, Mr. Pelham?—ah, I'll be bound you do."

"No," said I, with a loud laugh, but internal shiver; "but you know where to find *le bon vin et les jolies filles*. As for me, I am still a stranger in Paris, and amuse myself but very indifferently."

Thornton's face brightened. "I tell you what, my good fellow—I beg pardon—I mean Mr. Pelham—

I can show you the best sport in the world, if you can only spare me a little of your time—this very evening, perhaps?"

"I fear," said I, "I am engaged all the present week; but I long for nothing more than to cultivate an acquaintance, seemingly *so exactly to my own taste*."

Thornton's grey eyes twinkled. "Will you breakfast with me on Saturday?" said he.

"I shall be *too* happy," I replied.

There was now a short pause. I took advantage of it. "I think," said I, "I have seen you once or twice with a tall, handsome man, in a loose great coat of very singular colour. Pray, if not impertinent, who is he? I am sure I have seen him before in England."

I looked full upon Thornton as I said this; he changed colour, and answered my gaze with a quick glance from his small, glittering eye, before he replied, "I scarcely know who you mean, my acquaintance is so large and miscellaneous at Paris. It might have been Johnson, or Smith, or Howard, or anybody, in short."

"It is a man nearly six feet high," said I, "thin, and remarkably well made, of a pale complexion, light eyes, and very black hair, mustachios and whiskers. I saw him with you once in the Bois de Boulogne, and once in a hell in the Palais Royal. Surely, *now* you will recollect who he is?"

Thornton was evidently disconcerted. "Oh!" said he, after a short pause, and another of his peculiarly quick, sly glances.—"Oh, *that* man; I have known him a very short time. What *is* his name?—let *me* see!" and Mr. Thornton affected to look down in a complete reverie of dim remembrances.

I saw, however, that, from time to time, his eye glanced up to me, with a restless, inquisitive expression, and as instantly retired.

"Ah," said I, carelessly, "I think I know who he is!"

"Who?" cried Thornton, eagerly, and utterly off his guard.

"And yet," I pursued, without noticing the interruption, "it scarcely can be—the colour of the hair is so very different."

Thornton again appeared to relapse into his recollections.

"War—Warbur—ah, I have it now!" cried he, "Warburton—that's it—that's the name—is it the one you supposed, Mr. Pelham?"

"No," said I, apparently perfectly satisfied. "I was quite mistaken. Good morning, I did not think it was so late. On Saturday, then, Mr. Thornton—*au plaisir!*"

"A cunning dog!" said I to myself, as I left the apartments. "However, *on peut être trop fin*. I shall have him yet."

The surest way to make a dupe, is to let your victim suppose you *are* his.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Voilà de l'érudition.*—*Les Femmes Savantes.*

I FOUND, on my return, covered with blood, and foaming with passion, my inestoppable valet—Bedos!

"What's the matter?" said I.

"Matter!" repeated Bedos, in a tone almost inarticulate with rage; and then, rejoicing at the opportunity of unbosoming his wrath, he poured out a vast volley of *ivrognes* and *carognes*, against our dame du château, of monkey reminiscence. With great difficulty, I gathered at last, from his vituperations, that the enraged landlady, determined to wreak her vengeance on some one, had sent for him into her *appartement*, accosted him with a smile, bade him sit down, regaled him with cold *vol-au-vent*, and a glass of Curaçoa, and, while he was felicitating himself on his good fortune, slipped out of the room: presently, three tall fellows entered with sticks.

"We'll teach you," said the biggest of them—"we'll teach you to lock up ladies, for the indulgence of your vulgar amusement;" and, without one other word, they fell upon Bedos with incredible zeal and vigour. The valiant valet defended himself, tooth and nail, for some time, for which he only got the more soundly belaboured. In the meanwhile the landlady entered, and, with the same gentle smile as before, begged him to make no ceremony, to proceed with his present amusement, and when he was tired with the exercise, hoped he would refresh himself with another glass of Curaçoa.

"It was this," said Bedos, with a

whimper, "which hurt me the most, to think she should serve me so cruelly, after I had eaten so plentifully of the *vol-au-vent*; envy and injustice I can bear, but treachery stabs me to the heart."

When these threshers of men were tired, the lady satisfied, and Bedos half dead, they suffered the unhappy valet to withdraw; the mistress of the hotel giving him a note, which she desired, with great civility, that he would transmit to me on my return. This, I found, inclosed my bill, and informed me that, my month being out on the morrow, she had promised my rooms to a particular friend, and begged I would, therefore, have the *bonté* to choose another apartment.

"Carry my luggage forthwith," said I, "to the Hôtel de Mirabeau:" and that very evening I changed my abode.

I was engaged that day to a literary dinner at the Marquis d'Al——; and as I knew I should meet Vincent, I felt some pleasure in repairing to my entertainer's hotel. They were just going to dinner as I entered. A good many English were of the party. The good-natured, in all senses of the word, Lady ——, who always affected to pet me, cried aloud, "Pelham, *mon joli petit mignon*, I have not seen you for an age—do give me your arm."

Madame d'Anville was just before me, and, as I looked at her, I saw that her eyes were full of tears; my heart smote me for my late inattention, and going up to her, I only nodded to Lady ——, and said, in reply to her invitation, "*Non, perfide*, it is my turn to be cruel now. Remember

* *There 's erudition for you*

your flirtation with Mr. Howard de Howard."

"Pooh!" said Lady —, taking Lord Vincent's arm, "your jealousy does indeed rest upon '*a trifle light as air*.'"

"Do you forgive me?" whispered I to Madame d'Anville, as I handed her to the *salle à manger*.

"Does not love forgive everything?" was her answer.

"At least," thought I, "it never talks in those pretty phrases!"

✓ The conversation soon turned upon books. As for me, I rarely at that time took a share in those discussions; indeed, I have long laid it down as a rule, that when your fame, or your notoriety, is once established, you never gain by talking to more than one person at a time. If you don't shine, you are a fool—if you do, you are a bore. You must become either ridiculous or unpopular—either hurt your own selflove by stupidity, or that of others by wit. I therefore sat in silence, looking exceedingly edified, and now and then muttering "good!" "true!" Thank heaven, however, the suspension of one faculty only increases the vivacity of the others; my eyes and ears always watch like sentinels over the repose of my lips. Careless and indifferent as I seem to all things, nothing ever escapes me: I have two peculiarities which serve me, it may be, instead of talent; *I observe, and I remember*.

"You have seen Jouy's '*Hermite de la Chaussée d'Antin*?' " said our host to Lord Vincent.

"I have, and think meanly of it. There is a perpetual aim at something pointed, which as perpetually merges into something dull. He is like a bad swimmer, strikes out with great force, makes a confounded splash, and never gets a yard the further for it. It is a great effort *not to sink*. Indeed, Monsieur d'A—, your literature is at a very reduced ebb;—

bombastic in the drama—shallow in philosophy—mawkish in poetry, your writers in the present day seem to think, with Boileau—

'*Souvent de tous nos maux la raison est le pire.*' *

"Surely," cried Madame d'Anville, "you will allow De la Martine's poetry to be beautiful!"

"I allow it," said he, "to be among the best you have; and I know very few lines in your language equal to the two first stanzas in his '*Meditation on Napoleon*,' or to those exquisite verses called '*Le Lac*;' but *you* will allow also, that he wants originality and nerve. His thoughts are pathetic, but not deep; he whines but sheds no tears. He has, in his imitation of Lord Byron, reversed the great miracle; instead of turning water into wine, he has turned wine into water. Besides, he is so unparadoxably obscure. He thinks, with Bacchus—(you remember, D'A—, the line in Euripides, which I will *not* quote), that '*there is something august in the shades*;' but he has applied this thought wrongly—in his obscurity there is nothing sublime—it is the back-ground of a Dutch picture. It is only a red herring, or an old hat, which he has invested with such pomposity of shadow and darkness."

"But his verses are *so smooth*," said Lady —.

"Ah!" answered Vincent.

"Quand la rime enfin se trouve au bout des vers,

Qu'importe que le reste y soit mis de travers?" †

"*Hélas!*" said the Viscount d'A—, an author of no small celebrity himself; "I agree with you—we shall

* *Often of all our ills the worst is reason*

† *No matter what the stuff, if good the rhyme—*

The rubble stands cemented with the line.

PARAPHRASE

never again see a Voltaire or a Rousseau."

"There is but little justice in those complaints, often as they are made," replied Vincent. "You may not, it is true, see a Voltaire or a Rousseau, but you will see their equals. Genius can never be exhausted by one individual. In our country, the poets after Chaucer in the fifteenth century complained of the decay of their art—they did not anticipate Shakspeare. In Hayley's time, who ever dreamt of the ascension of Byron? Yet Shakspeare and Byron came like the bridegroom 'in the dead of night;' and you have the same probability of producing—not, indeed, another Rousseau, but a writer to do equal honour to your literature."

"I think," said Lady —, "that Rousseau's 'Julie' is over-rated. I had heard so much of 'La Nouvelle Héloïse' when I was a girl, and been so often told that it was destruction to read it, that I bought the book the very day after I was married. I own to you that I could not get through it."

"I am not surprised at it," answered Vincent; "but Rousseau is not the less a genius for all that. There is no plot in his novel to bear out the style, and he himself is right when he says, 'this book will suit few readers.' One letter would delight every one—four volumes of them are a surfeit—it is the *toujours perdrix*. But the chief beauty of that wonderful conception of an impassioned and meditative mind is to be found in the inimitable manner in which the thoughts are embodied, and in the tenderness, the truth, the profundity of the thoughts themselves. When Lord Edouard says, '*c'est le chemin des passions qui m'a conduit à la philosophie*,'* he incul-

cates, in one simple phrase, a profound and unanswerable truth. It is in these remarks that nature is chiefly found in the writings of Rousseau. Too much engrossed in himself to be deeply skilled in the *characters* of others, that very *self-study* had yet given him a knowledge of the more hidden recesses of the heart. He could perceive at once the motive and the cause of actions, but he wanted the patience to trace the elaborate and winding progress of their effects. He saw the passions in their home, but he could not follow them abroad. He knew *mankind* in the general, but not *men* in the detail. Thus, when he makes an aphorism, or reflection, it comes home at once to you as true; but when he would *analyse* that reflection—when he argues, reasons, and attempts to prove, you reject him as unnatural, or you refute him as false. It is then that he partakes of that *manie commune* which he imputes to other philosophers, '*de nier ce qui est, et d'expliquer ce qui n'est pas*.'**

There was a short pause. "I think," said Madame d'Anville, "that it is in those reflections which you admire so much in Rousseau, that our authors in general excel."

"You are right," said Vincent, "and for this reason—with you men of letters are nearly always men of the world. Hence their quick perceptions are devoted to human beings as well as to books. They make observations acutely, and embody them with grace; but it is worth remarking, that the same cause which produced the aphorism, frequently prevents its being profound. These literary *gens du monde* have the tact to observe, but not the patience, perhaps not the time, to investigate. They make the maxim, but they never explain to you the train of

* It is the path of the passions which has conducted me to philosophy.

* To deny that which is, and explain that which is not.

reasoning which led to it. Hence they are more brilliant than true. An English writer will seldom dare to make a maxim, involving, perhaps, in two lines, one of the most important of moral problems, without bringing pages to support his dictum. A French essayist leaves it wholly to itself. He tells you neither how he came by his reasons, nor their conclusion: "*le plus fou souvent est le plus satisfait*."* Consequently, if less tedious than the English, your reasoners are more dangerous, and ought rather to be considered as models of terseness than of reflection. A man might learn to *think* sooner from your writers, but he will learn to *think* justly sooner from ours. Many observations of La Bruyère and Rochefoucault—the latter especially—have obtained credit for truth solely from their point. They possess exactly the same merit as the very sensible—permit me to add—very *French* line in Corneille:—

Ma plus douce espérance est de perdre
l'espoir."†

The marquis took advantage of the silence which followed Vincent's criticism, to rise from table. We all (except Vincent, who took leave) adjourned to the salon. "*Qui est cet homme là ?*" said one, "*comme il est épris de lui-même !*" "How silly he is," cried another—"How ugly," said a third. "What a taste in literature

—such a talker—such shallowness, and such assurance—not worth the answering—could not slip in a word—disagreeable, revolting, awkward, slovenly," were the most complimentary opinions bestowed upon the unfortunate Vincent. The old railed at his *mauvais goût*, and the young at his *mauvais cœur*, for the former always attribute whatever does not correspond with their sentiments, to a perversion of taste; and the latter, whatever does not come up to their enthusiasm, to a depravity of heart.

As for me, I went home, enriched with two new observations; first, that one may not speak of anything relative to a foreign country, as one would if one were a native. National censures become particular affronts. Secondly, that those who know mankind in theory, seldom know it in practice: the very wisdom that conceives a rule, is accompanied with the abstraction, or the vanity, which destroys it. I mean, that the philosopher of the cabinet is often too diffident to put into action his observations, or too eager for display to conceal their design. Lord Vincent values himself upon his *science du monde*. He has read much upon men, he has reflected more; he lays down aphorisms to govern or to please them. He goes into society; he is cheated by the one half, and the other half he offends. The sage in the cabinet is but a fool in the salon; and the most consummate men of the world are those who have considered the least on it

* He who has the least sense is the most satisfied.

† My sweetest hoping is to forfeit hope.

CHAPTER XXV.

Falstaff.—What money is in my purse ?

Page.—Seven groats and two-pence.—*Second Part of Henry IV*

En iterum Crispinus !

THE next day a note was brought me, which had been sent to my former lodgings in the Hôtel de Paris ; it was from Thornton.

“MY DEAR SIR,” (it began)

“I am very sorry that particular business will prevent me the pleasure of seeing you at my rooms on Saturday. I hope to be more fortunate some other day. I should be glad to introduce you, the first opportunity, to my friends in the *Rue Grétry*, for I like obliging my countrymen. I am sure, if you were to go there, you would eat and come again—one shoulder of mutton drives down another.

“I beg you to accept my repeated excuses, and remain,

“Dear Sir,

“Your very obedient servant,

“THOMAS THORNTON.

“Rue St. Dominique,
Friday Morning.”

This letter produced in me many and manifold cogitations. What could possibly have induced Mr. Tom Thornton, rogue as he was, to postpone thus of his own accord, the plucking of a pigeon, which he had such good reason to believe he had entrapped ! There was evidently no longer the same avidity to cultivate my acquaintance as before ; in putting off our appointment with so little ceremony, he did not even fix a day for another meet-

ing. What had altered his original designs towards me ? for if Vincent's account were true, it was natural to suppose that he wished to profit by any acquaintance he might form with me, and therefore such an acquaintance his own interests would induce him to continue and confirm.

Either, then, he no longer had the same necessity for a dupe, or he no longer imagined I should become one. Yet neither of these suppositions was probable. It was not likely that he should grow suddenly honest, or suddenly rich : nor had I, on the other hand, given him any reason to suppose I was a jot more wary than any other individual he might have imposed upon. On the contrary, I had appeared to seek his acquaintance with an eagerness which said but little for my knowledge of the world. The more I reflected, the more I should have been puzzled, had I not connected his present backwardness with his acquaintance with the stranger, whom he termed Warburton. It is true, that I had no reason to suppose so : it was a conjecture wholly unsupported, and, indeed, against my better sense ; yet, from some unanalysed associations, I could not divest myself of the supposition.

“I will soon see,” thought I : and, wrapping myself in my cloak, for the day was bitterly cold, I bent my way to Thornton's lodgings. I could not explain to myself the deep interest I took in whatever was connected with (the so-called) Warburton, or whatever

promised to discover more clearly any particulars respecting him. His behaviour in the gambling-house; his conversation with the woman in the *Jardin des Plantes*; and the singular circumstance, that a man of so very aristocratic an appearance should be connected with Thornton, and only seen in such low scenes, and with such low society, would not have been sufficient so strongly to occupy my mind, had it not been for certain dim recollections, and undefinable associations, that his appearance when present, and my thoughts of him when absent, perpetually recalled.

As, engrossed with meditations of this nature, I was passing over the *Pont Neuf*, I perceived the man whom Warburton had so earnestly watched in the gambling-house, and whom my conjectures identified with the "Tyrrell," who had formed the subject of conversation in the *Jardin des Plantes*, pass slowly before me. There was an appearance of great exhaustion in his swarthy and strongly-marked countenance. He walked carelessly on, neither looking to the right nor the left, with that air of thought and abstraction common to all men in the habit of indulging any engrossing and exciting passion.

We were just on the other side of the *Seine*, when I perceived the woman of the *Jardin des Plantes* approach. Tyrrell (for that, I afterwards discovered, was really his name) started as she came near, and asked her in a tone of some asperity, where she had been? As I was but a few paces behind, I had a clear, full view of the woman's countenance. She was about twenty-eight or thirty years of age. Her features were decidedly handsome, though somewhat too sharp and aquiline. Her eyes were light and rather sunken; and her complexion bespoke somewhat of the paleness and languor of ill-health. On the whole, the expression of her face, though

decided, was not unpleasing, and when she returned Tyrrell's rather rude salutation, it was with a smile, which made her, for the moment, absolutely beautiful.

"Where have I been to?" she said, in answer to his interrogatory; "Why, I went to look at the New Church, which they told me was so *superbe*."

"Methinks," replied the man, "that ours are not precisely the circumstances in which such spectacles are amusing."

"Nay, Tyrrell," said the woman, as, taking his arm, they walked on together a few paces before me, "nay, we are quite rich now to what we have been; and, if you *do* play again, our two hundred pounds may swell into a fortune. Your losses have brought you skill, and you may now turn them into actual advantages."

Tyrrell did not reply exactly to these remarks, but appeared as if debating with himself. "Two hundred pounds—twenty already gone!—in a few months all will have melted away. What is it then now but a respite from starvation!—but with luck it may become a competence."

"And why not have luck? many a fortune has been made with a worse beginning," said the woman.

"True, Margaret," pursued the gambler, "and even without luck, our fate can only commence a month or two sooner—better a short doom than a lingering torture."

"What think you of trying some new game where you have more experience, or where the chances are greater than in that of *rouge et noir*?" asked the woman. "Could you not make something out of that tall, handsome man, who, Thornton says, is so rich?"

"Ah, if one could!" sighed Tyrrell, wistfully. "Thornton tells me, that he has won thousands from him, and that they are mere drops in his income. Thornton is a good, easy

careless fellow, and might let me into a share of the booty ; but then, in what games can I engage him ?”

Here I passed this well-suited pair, and lost the remainder of their conversation. “Well,” thought I, “if this precious personage does starve at last, he will most richly deserve it, partly for his designs on the stranger, principally for his opinion of Thornton. If he were a knave only, one might pity him ; but a knave and fool both, are a combination of evil, for which there is no intermediate purgatory of opinion—nothing short of utter damnation.”

I soon arrived at Mr. Thornton’s abode. The same old woman, poring over the same novel of Crebillon, made me the same reply as before ; and accordingly again I ascended the obscure and rugged stairs, which seemed to indicate, that the road to vice is not so easy as one generally supposes. I knocked at the door, and, receiving no answering acknowledgment, opened it at once. The first thing I saw was the dark, rough coat of Warburton ; that person’s back was turned to me, and he was talking with some energy to Thornton (who lounged idly in a chair, with one ungartered leg thrown over the elbow).

“Ah, Mr. Pelham,” exclaimed the latter, starting from his not very graceful position, “it gives me great pleasure to see you—Mr. Warburton, Mr. Pelham—Mr. Pelham, Mr. Warburton.”

My new-made and mysterious acquaintance drew himself up to his full height, and bowed very slightly to my own acknowledgment of the introduction. A low person would have thought him rude. I only supposed him ignorant of the world. No man of the world is uncivil. He turned round, after this stiff condescension, and sank down on the sofa, with his back towards me.

“I was mistaken,” thought I, “when

I believed him to be above such associates as Thornton—they are well matched.”

“My dear sir,” said Thornton, “I am very sorry I could not see you to breakfast—a particular engagement prevented me—*verbum sap.* Mr. Pelham, you take me, I suppose—black eyes, white skin, and such an ankle!” and the fellow rubbed his great hands and chuckled.

“Well,” said I, “I cannot blame you, whatever may be my loss—a dark eye and a straight ankle are powerful excuses. What says Mr. Warburton to them?” and I turned to the object of my interrogatory.

“Really,” he answered drily, (but in a voice that struck me as feigned and artificial,) and without moving from his uncourteous position, “Mr. Thornton only can judge of the niceties of his peculiar tastes, or the justice of his general excuses.”

“Mr. Warburton said this in a sarcastic bitter tone. Thornton bit his lips, more, I should think, at the manner than the words, and his small grey eyes sparkled with a malignant and stern expression, which suited the character of his face far better than the careless levity which his glances usually denoted.

“They are no such great friends after all,” thought I ; “and now let me change my attack. Pray,” I asked, “among all your numerous acquaintances at Paris, did you ever meet with a Mr. Tyrrell ?”

Warburton started from his chair, and as instantly re-seated himself. Thornton eyed me with one of those peculiar looks which so strongly reminded me of a dog, in deliberation whether to bite or run away.

“I do know a Mr. Tyrrell !” he said, after a short pause.

“What sort of a person is he ?” I asked with an indifferent air—“a great gamester, is he not ?”

“He does slap it down on the

colours now and then," replied Thornton. "I hope you don't know him, Mr. Pelham!"

"Why?" said I, evading the question. "His character is not affected by a propensity so common, unless, indeed, you suppose him to be more a gambler than a gamester, viz., more acute than unlucky."

"Heaven forbid that I should say any such thing," replied Thornton; "you won't catch an old lawyer in such imprudence."

"The greater the truth, the greater the libel," said Warburton, with a sneer.

"No," resumed Thornton, "I know nothing against Mr. Tyrrell—*nothing!* He *may be* a very good man, and I believe he is; but as a friend, Mr. Pelham, (and Mr. Thornton grew quite affectionate), I advise you to have as little as possible to do *with that sort of people.*"

"Truly," said I, "you have now excited my curiosity. Nothing, you know, is half so inviting as mystery."

Thornton looked as if he had expected a very different reply; and Warburton said, in an abrupt tone—

"Whoever enters an unknown road in a fog may easily lose himself."

"True," said I; "but that very chance is more agreeable than a road

where one knows every tree! Danger and novelty are more to my taste than safety and sameness. Besides, as I rarely gamble myself, I can lose little by an acquaintance with those who do."

Another pause ensued—and, finding I had got all from Mr. Thornton and his uncourteous guest that I was likely to do, I took my hat and my departure.

"I do not know," thought I, "whether I have profited much by this visit. Let me consider. In the first place, I have not ascertained why I was put off by Mr. Thornton—for as to his excuse, it could only have availed one day, and had he been anxious for my acquaintance, he would have named another. I have, however, discovered, first, that he does not wish me to form any connection with Tyrrell; secondly, from Warburton's sarcasm, and his glance of reply, that there is but little friendship between those two, whatever be the *intimacy*; and, thirdly, that Warburton, from his *dorsal* positions, so studiously preserved, either wished to be uncivil or unnoticed." The latter, after all, was the most probable supposition; and, upon the whole, I felt more than ever convinced that he was the person I suspected him to be

CHAPTER XXVI.

Tell how the fates my giddy course did guide,
The inconstant turns of every changing hour.

Pierce Gaveston, by M. DRAYTON

Je me retire donc.—Adieu, Paris, adieu !—BOILEAU.

WHEN I returned home, I found on my table the following letter from my mother :—

“MY DEAR HENRY,

“I am rejoiced to hear you are so well entertained at Paris—that you have been so often to the D——s and C——s; that Coulon says you are his best pupil—that your favourite horse is so much admired—and that you have only exceeded your allowance by £1,000. With some difficulty I have persuaded your uncle to transmit you an order for 1,500*l.*, which will, I trust, make up all your deficiencies.

“You must not, my dear child, be so extravagant for the future, and for a very good reason, viz., I do not see how you can. Your uncle, I fear, will not again be so generous, and your father cannot assist you. You will therefore see more clearly than ever the necessity of marrying an heiress: there are only two in England (the daughters of gentlemen) worthy of you—the most deserving of these has 10,000*l.* a year, the other has 100,000*l.* The former is old, ugly, and very ill-tempered; the latter tolerably pretty, and agreeable, and just of age; but you will perceive the impropriety of even thinking of her till we have tried the other. I am going to ask both to my Sunday *soirées*, where I never admit any single men, so that *there*, at least, you will have no rivals.

“And now, my dear son, before I

enter into a subject of great importance to you, I wish to recall to your mind that pleasure is never an end, but a means—viz., that in your horses and amusements at Paris—your visits and your *liaisons*—you have always, I trust, remembered that these were only so far desirable as the methods of shining in society. I have now a new scene on which you are to enter, with very different objects in view, and where any pleasures you may find have nothing the least in common with those you at present enjoy.

“I know that this preface will not frighten you, as it might many silly young men. Your education has been too carefully attended to, for you to imagine that any step can be rough or unpleasant which raises you in the world.

“To come at once to the point. One of the seats in your uncle's borough of Buyemall is every day expected to be vacated; the present member, Mr. Toolington, cannot possibly live a week, and your uncle is very desirous that you should fill the vacancy which Mr. Toolington's death will create. Though I called it Lord Glenmorris's borough, yet it is not entirely at his disposal, which I think very strange, since my father, who was not half so rich as your uncle, could send two members to Parliament without the least trouble in the world—but I don't understand these matters. Possibly your uncle (poor

man) does not manage them well. However, he says no time is to be lost. You are to return immediately to England, and come down to his house in —shire. It is supposed you will have some contest, but be certain eventually to come in.

"You will also, in this visit to Lord Glenmorris, have an excellent opportunity of securing his affection; you know it is some time since he saw you, and the greater part of his property is unentailed. If you come into the House, you must devote yourself wholly to it, and I have no fear of your succeeding; for I remember, when you were quite a child, how well you spoke, 'My name is Norval,' and 'Romans, countrymen, and lovers,' &c. I heard Mr. Canning speak the other day, and I think his voice is quite like yours. In short, I make no doubt of seeing you in the ministry in a very few years.

"You see, my dear son, that it is absolutely necessary you should set out immediately. You will call on Lady —, and you will endeavour to make firm friends of the most desirable among your present acquaintance; so that you may be on the same footing you are now, should you return to Paris. This a little civility will easily do; nobody (as I before observed), except in England, ever loses by politeness;—by the by, that last word is one you must never use, it is too *Gloucester-place* like.

"You will also be careful, in returning to England, to make very little use of French phrases; no vulgarity is more displeasing. I could not help being exceedingly amused by a book written the other day, which professes to give an accurate description of good society. Not knowing what to make us say in English, the author has made us talk nothing but French. I have often wondered what common people think of us, since in their novels they always affect to pourtray us so

different from themselves. I am very much afraid we are in all things exactly like them, except in being more simple and unaffected. The higher the rank, indeed, the less pretence, because there is less to pretend to. This is the chief reason why our manners are better than low persons. Ours are more natural, because they imitate no one else; theirs are affected, because they think to imitate ours; and whatever is evidently borrowed becomes vulgar. Original affectation is sometimes good *ton*,—imitated affectation, always bad.

"Well, my dear Henry, I must now conclude this letter, already too long to be interesting. I hope to see you about ten days after you receive this; and if you can bring me a Cachemire shawl, it would give me great pleasure to see your taste in its choice. God bless you, my dear son.

"Your very affectionate,
"FRANCES PELHAM."

"P.S. I hope you go to church sometimes: I am sorry to see the young men of the present day so irreligious; it is very bad taste! Perhaps you could get my old friend, Madame de —, to choose the Cachemire;—take care of your health."

This letter, which I read carefully twice over, threw me into a most serious meditation. My first feeling was regret at leaving Paris; my second, was a certain exultation at the new prospects so unexpectedly opened to me. The great aim of a philosopher is, to reconcile every disadvantage by some counterbalance of good; where he cannot create this, he should imagine it. I began, therefore, to consider less what I should lose than what I should gain, by quitting Paris. In the first place, I was tolerably tired of its amusements: no business is half so fatiguing as pleasure. I longed for a change: behold, a change was at hand! Then, to say truth, I was

nearly glad of a pretence of escaping from a numerous cohort of *folles amours*, with Madame d'Anville at the head; and the very circumstance which men who play the German flute and fall in love would have considered the most vexatious, I regarded as the most consolatory.

My mind being thus relieved from its primary regret at my departure, I now suffered it to look forward to the advantages of my return to England. My love of excitement and variety made an election, in which I was to have both the importance of the contest and the certainty of the success, a very agreeable object of anticipation.

I was also by this time wearied with my attendance upon women, and eager

to exchange it for the ordinary objects of ambition to men: and my vanity whispered that my success in the one was no unfavourable omen of my prosperity in the other. On my return to England, with a new scene and a new motive for conduct, I resolved that I would commence a different character from that I had hitherto assumed. How far I kept this resolution the various events hereafter to be shown will testify. For myself, I felt that I was now about to enter a more crowded scene upon a more elevated ascent; and my previous experience of human nature was sufficient to convince me that my safety required a more continual circumspection, and my success a more dignified bearing.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Je noterai cela, madame, dans mon livre.—MOLIERE.

I AM not one of those persons who are many days in deciding what may be effected in one. "On the third day from this," said I to Bedos, "at half-past nine in the morning, I shall leave Paris for England."

"Oh, my poor wife!" said the valet, "she will break her heart if I leave her."

"Then stay," said I. Bedos shrugged his shoulders.

"I prefer being with Monsieur to all things."

"What, even to your wife?" The courteous rascal placed his hand to his heart and bowed. "You shall not suffer by your fidelity—you shall take your wife with you."

The conjugal valet's countenance fell. "No," he said, "no; he could not take advantage of Monsieur's generosity."

"I insist upon it—not another word."

"I beg a thousand pardons of Monsieur; but—but my wife is very ill, and unable to travel."

"Then, in that case, so excellent a husband cannot think of leaving a sick and destitute wife."

"Poverty has no law; if I consulted my heart, and stayed, I should starve, *et il faut vivre.*" *

"*Je n'en vois pas la nécessité,*" † replied I, as I got into my carriage. That repartee, by the way, I cannot claim as my own; it is the very unanswerable answer of a judge to an expostulating thief.

I made the round of reciprocal regrets, according to the orthodox

* *One must live.*

† *I don't see the necessity of that.*

formula. The Duchesse de Perpignan was the last;—(Madame d'Anville I reserved for another day)—that virtuous and wise personage was in the *boudoir* of reception. I glanced at the fatal door as I entered. I have a great aversion, after any thing has once happened and fairly subsided, to make any allusion to its former existence. I never, therefore, talked to the Duchess about our ancient *égaremens*. I spoke, this morning, of the marriage of one person, the death of another, and lastly, the departure of my individual self.

"When do you go?" she said, eagerly.

"In two days: my departure will be softened, if I can execute any commissions in England for Madame."

"None," said she; and then in a low tone (that none of the idlers, who were always found at her morning *levées*, should hear), she added, "you will receive a note from me this evening."

I bowed, changed the conversation, and withdrew. I dined in my own rooms, and spent the evening in looking over the various *billets doux*, received during my *séjour* at Paris.

"Where shall I put all these locks of hair?" asked Bedos, opening a drawer full.

"Into my scrap-book."

"And all these letters?"

"Into the fire."

I was just getting into bed when the Duchesse de Perpignan's note arrived—it was as follows:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"For that word, so doubtful in our language, I may at least call you in *your own*. I am unwilling that you should leave this country with those sentiments you now entertain of me, unaltered, yet I cannot imagine any form of words of sufficient magic to change them. Oh! if you knew how much I am to be pitied; if you could

look for one moment into this lonely and blighted heart; if you could trace, step by step, the progress I have made in folly and sin, you would see how much of what you now condemn and despise, I have owed to circumstances, rather than to the vice of my disposition. I was born a beauty, educated a beauty, owed fame, rank, power to beauty; and it is to the advantages I have derived from person that I owe the ruin of **my** mind. You have seen how much I now derive from art; I loathe myself as I write that sentence; but no matter: from that moment you loathed me too. You did not take into consideration that I had been living on excitement all my youth, and that in my maturer years I could not relinquish it. I had reigned by my attractions, and I thought every art preferable to resigning my empire: but, in feeding my vanity, I had not been able to stifle the dictates of my heart. Love is so natural to a woman, that she is scarcely a woman who resists it: but in me it has been a sentiment, not a passion.

"Sentiment, then, and vanity, have been my seducers. I said, that I owed my errors to circumstances, not to nature. You will say, that in confessing love and vanity to be my seducers, I contradict this assertion—you are mistaken. I mean, that though vanity and sentiment were in me, yet the scenes in which I have been placed, and the events which I have witnessed, gave to those latent currents of action a wrong and a dangerous direction. I was formed *to love*; for one whom I did love I could have made every sacrifice. I married a man I hated, and I only learnt the depths of my heart when it was too late.

"Enough of this; you will leave this country; we shall never meet again—never! You may return to Paris, but I **shall** then be no more."

n'importe—I shall be unchanged to the last. *Je mourrai en reine.*

"As a latest pledge of what I have felt for you, I send you the enclosed chain and ring; as a latest favour, I request you to wear them for six months, and, above all, for two hours in the Tuileries to-morrow. You will laugh at this request: it seems idle and romantic—perhaps it is so. Love has many exaggerations in sentiment, which reason would despise. What wonder, then, that mine, above that of all others, should conceive them? You will not, I know, deny this request. Farewell!—in this world we shall never meet again. Farewell!"

"E. P."

"A most sensible effusion," said I to myself, when I had read this billet; "and yet, after all, it shows more feeling and more character than I could have supposed she possessed." I took up the chain: it was of Maltese workmanship; not very handsome, nor, indeed, in any way remarkable, except for a plain hair ring which was attached to it, and which I found myself unable to take off, without breaking. "It is a very singular request," thought I, "but then it comes from a very singular person; and as it rather partakes of adventure and intrigue, I shall at all events appear in the Tuileries to-morrow, *chained and ringed.*"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Thy incivility shall not make me fail to do what becomes me; and since thou hast more valour than courtesy, I for thee will hazard that life which thou wouldst take from me.—*Cassandra, "elegantly done into English by SIR CHARLES COTTERELL."*

ABOUT the usual hour for the promenade in the Tuileries, I conveyed myself thither. I set the chain and ring in full display, rendered still more conspicuous by the dark-coloured dress which I always wore. I had not been in the gardens ten minutes, before I perceived a young Frenchman, scarcely twenty years of age, look with a very peculiar air at my new decorations. He passed and repassed me, much oftener than the alternations of the walk warranted; and at last, taking off his hat said in a low tone, that he wished much for the honour of exchanging a few words with me in private. I saw, at the first glance, that he was a gentleman, and accordingly withdrew with him among the trees, in the more retired part of the garden.

"Permit me," said he, "to inquire how that ring and chain came into your possession?"

"Monsieur," I replied, "you will understand me, when I say, that the honour of another person is implicated in my concealment of that secret."

"Sir," said the Frenchman, colouring violently, "I have seen them before—in a word, they belong to me!"

I smiled—my young hero fired at this. "*Oui, Monsieur,*" said he, speaking very loud, and very quick, "they belong to me, and I insist upon your immediately restoring them, or vindicating your claim to them by arms."

"Yor leave me but one answer, Monsieur," said I; "I will find a friend to wait upon you immediately. Allow me to inquire your address?" The Frenchman, who was greatly agitated, produced a card. We bowed and separated.

I was glancing over the address

I held in my hand, which was—*C. de Vautran, Rue de Bourbon, Numéro*—when my ears were saluted with—

“Now do you know me?—*thou shouldst be Alonzo.*”

I did not require the faculty of sight to recognise Lord Vincent. “My dear fellow,” said I, “I am rejoiced to see you!” and thereupon I poured into his ear the particulars of my morning adventure. Lord Vincent listened to me with much apparent interest, and spoke very unaffectedly of his readiness to serve me, and his regret at the occasion.

“Pooh!” said I, “a duel in France is not like one in England; the former is a matter of course; a trifle of common occurrence; one makes an engagement to fight, in the same breath as an engagement to dine; but the latter is a thing of state and solemnity—long faces—early rising—and will-making. But *do* get this business over as soon as you can, that we may dine at the *Rocher* afterwards.”

“Well, my dear Pelham,” said Vincent, “I cannot refuse you my services; and as I suppose *Monsieur de Vautran* will choose swords, I venture to augur every thing from your skill in that species of weapon. It is the first time I have ever interfered in affairs of this nature, but I hope to get well through the present.

‘*Nobilis ornatur lauro collega secundo.*’

as Juvenal says: *au revoir*,” and away went Lord Vincent, half forgetting all his late anxiety for my life in his paternal pleasure for the delivery of his quotation.

Vincent is the only punster I ever knew with a good heart. No action, to that race in general, is so serious an occupation as the play upon words; and the remorseless habit of murdering a phrase, renders them perfectly

obdurate to the simple death of a friend. I walked through every variety the straight paths of the Tuilleries could afford, and was beginning to get exceedingly tired, when Lord Vincent returned. He looked very grave, and I saw at once that he was come to particularise the circumstances of the last extreme. “*The Bois de Boulogne—pistols—in one hour*,” were the three leading features of his detail.

“Pistols!” said I; “well, be it so. I would rather have had swords, for the young man’s sake as much as my own: but thirteen paces and a steady aim will settle the business as soon. We will try a bottle of the *Chambertin* to-day, Vincent.” The punster smiled faintly, and for once in his life made no reply. We walked gravely and soberly to my lodgings for the pistols, and then proceeded to the engagement as silently as philosophers should do.

The Frenchman and his second were on the ground first. I saw that the former was pale and agitated, not, I think, from fear, but passion. When we took our ground, Vincent came to me, and said, in a low tone, “For Heaven’s sake, suffer me to accommodate this, if possible!”

“It is not in *our* power,” said I, receiving the pistol. I looked steadily at *de Vautran*, and took my aim. His pistol, owing, I suppose, to the trembling of his hand, went off a moment sooner than he had anticipated—the ball grazed my hat. My aim was more successful—I struck him in the shoulder—the exact place I had intended. He staggered a few paces, but did not fall.

We hastened towards him—his check assumed a still more livid hue as I approached! he muttered some half-formed curses between his teeth, and turned from me to his second.

“You will inquire whether *Monsieur de Vautran* is satisfied,” said

I to Vincent, and retired to a short distance.

"His second," said Vincent, (after a brief conference with that person,) "replies to my question, that Monsieur de Vautran's wound has left him, for the present, no alternative." Upon this answer I took Vincent's arm, and we returned forthwith to my carriage.

"I congratulate you most sincerely on the event of this duel," said Vincent. "Monsieur de M—— (de Vautran's second) informed me, when I waited on him, that your antagonist was one of the most celebrated pistol shots in Paris, and that a lady with

whom he had been long in love, made the death of the chain-bearer the price of her favours. Devilish lucky for you, my good fellow, that his hand trembled so; but I did not know *you* were so good a shot."

"Why," I answered, "I am *not* what is vulgarly termed 'a crack shot'—I cannot split a bullet on a penknife; but I am sure of a target somewhat smaller than a man: and my hand is as certain in the field as it is in the practice-yard."

"*Le sentiment de nos forces les augmente*,"* replied Vincent. "Shall I tell the coachman to drive to the Rocher?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

Here's a kind host, that makes the invitation,
To your own cost, to his *fort bonne collation*.

WYCHERLY'S *Gent. Dancing Master*.

Vous pouvez bien juger que je n'aurai pas grande peine à me consoler d'une chose dont je me suis déjà consolé tante de fois.—*Lettres de BOILEAU*.

As I was walking home with Vincent from the *Rue Mont-orgueil*, I saw, on entering the *Rue St. Honoré*, two figures before us; the tall and noble stature of the one I could not for a moment mistake. They stopped at the door of an hotel, which opened in that noiseless manner so peculiar to the *Conciergerie* of France. I was at the door the moment they disappeared, but not before I had caught a glance of the dark locks and pale countenance of Warburton,—my eye fell upon the number of the hotel.

"Surely," said I, "I have been in that house before."

"Likely enough," growled Vincent, who was gloriously drunk. "It is a house of two-fold utility—you may

play with cards, or coquet with women, which you please."

At these words I remembered the hotel and its inmates immediately. It belonged to an old nobleman, who, though on the brink of the grave, was still grasping at the good things on the margin. He lived with a pretty and clever woman, who bore the name and honours of his wife. They kept up two *salons*, one *pour le petit souper*, and the other *pour le petit jeu*. You saw much *écarté* and more love-making, and lost your heart and your money with equal facility. In a word, the marquis and his *jolie petite femme* were a wise and pros-

* *The conviction of our forces augment them.*

perous couple, who made the best of their lives, and lived decently and honourably upon other people.

"Allons, Pelham," cried Vincent, as I was still standing at the door in deliberation; "how much longer will you keep me to congeal in this 'eager and nipping air'—'*Quamdiu patientiam nostram abutere, Catilina.*'"

"Let us enter," said I. "I have the run of the house, and we may find——"

"Some young vices—some fair iniquities," interrupted Vincent, with a hiccup—

"Leade on, good fellows," quoth Robin Hood, 'Lead on, I do bid thee.'"

And with these words, the door opened in obedience to my rap, and we mounted to the marquis's tene-ment *au première*.

The room was pretty full—the *soi-disante* marquise was flitting from table to table—betting at each, and coquetting with all; and the marquis himself, with a moist eye and a shaking hand, was affecting the Don Juan with the various Elviras and Annas with which his *salon* was crowded. Vincent was trying to follow me through the crowd, but his confused vision and unsteady footing led him from one entanglement to another, till he was quite unable to proceed. A tall, corpulent Frenchman, six foot by five, was leaning, (*a great and weighty objection*), just before him, utterly occupied in the vicissitudes of an *écarté* table, and unconscious of Vincent's repeated efforts, first on one side, and then on the other, to pass him.

At last, the perplexed wit, getting more irascible as he grew more bewildered, suddenly seized the vast incumbrance by the arm, and said to him, in a sharp, querulous tone, "Pray, Monsieur, why are you like the lotc tree in Mahomet's Seventh heaven?"

"Sir!" cried the astonished French man.

"Because," (continued Vincent, answering his own enigma)—"because, *beyond you there is no passing!*"

The Frenchman (one of that race who always forgive any thing for a *bon mot*) smiled, bowed, and drew himself aside. Vincent steered by, and joining me, hiccuped out, "Fortiaque adversis opponite pectora rebus."

Meanwhile I had looked round the room for the objects of my pursuit: to my great surprise I could not perceive them; they may be in the other room, thought I, and to the other room I went; the supper was laid out, and an old *bonne* was quietly helping herself to some sweetmeat. All *other* human beings (if, indeed, an old woman can be called a human being!) were, however, invisible, and I remained perfectly bewildered as to the non-appearance of Warburton and his companion. I entered the gaming room once more—I looked round in every corner—I examined every face—but in vain; and with a feeling of disappointment very disproportioned to my loss, I took Vincent's arm, and we withdrew.

The next morning I spent with Madame d'Anville. A Frenchwoman easily consoles herself for the loss of a lover—she converts him into a friend, and thinks herself (nor is she much deceived) benefited by the exchange. We talked of our grief in maxims, and bade each other adieu in antitheses. Ah! it is a pleasant thing to drink with Alcionis (in Marmontel's Tale) of the rose-coloured phial—to sport with the fancy, not to brood over the passion of youth. There is a time when the heart, from very tenderness, runs over, and (so much do our virtues as well as vices flow from our passions) there is, perhaps, rather hope than anxiety for the future in that excess. Then, if Pleasure errs, it errs through heed-

lessness, not design; and Love, wandering over flowers, "proffers honey, but bears *not* a sting." Ah! happy time! in the lines of one who can so well translate feeling into words—

"Fate has not darkened thee—Hope has not made

The blossoms expand it but opens to fade;
Nothing is known of those wearing fears
Which will shadow the light of *our* after
years."—*The Improvisatrice.*

Pardon this digression—not much, it must be confessed, in my ordinary strain—but let me, dear reader, very seriously advise thee not to judge of me yet. When thou hast got to the end of my book, if thou dost condemn it or its hero—why "I will let thee alone" (as honest Dogberry advises) "till thou art sober; and, if thou make me not, then, the better answer, *thou* art not the man I took thee for."

CHAPTER XXX.

It must be confessed, that flattery comes mightily easy to one's mouth in the presence of royalty.—*Letters of STEPHEN MONTAGUE.*

'Tis he.—How came he thence—what doth he here?—LARA.

I HAD received for that evening (my last at Paris) an invitation from the Duchesse de B—. I knew that the party was to be small, and that very few besides the royal family would compose it. I had owed the honour of this invitation to my intimacy with the —s, the great friends of the duchesse, and I promised myself some pleasure in the engagement.

There were but eight or nine persons present when I entered the royal chamber. The most distinguished of these I recognised immediately as the —. He came forward with much grace as I approached, and expressed his pleasure at seeing me.

"You were presented, I think, about a month ago," added the —, with a smile of singular fascination; "I remember it well."

I bowed low to this compliment.

"Do you propose staying long at Paris?" continued the —.

"I protracted," I replied, "my departure solely for the honour this evening affords me. In so doing,

please your —, I have followed the wise maxim of keeping the greatest pleasure to the last."

The royal chevalier bowed to my answer with a smile still sweeter than before, and began a conversation with me which lasted for several minutes. I was much struck with the —'s air and bearing. They possess great dignity, without any affectation of its assumption. He speaks peculiarly good English, and the compliment of addressing me in that language was therefore as judicious as delicate. His observations owed little to his rank; they would have struck you as appropriate, and the air which accompanied them pleased you as graceful, even in a simple individual. Judge, then, if they charmed me in the —. The upper part of his countenance is prominent and handsome, and his eyes have much softness of expression. His figure is slight and particularly well knit; perhaps he is altogether more adapted to strike in private than with public effect. Upon the whole, he is one of those very few persons of great rank whom you

would have had pride in knowing as an equal, and have pleasure in acknowledging as a superior.*

As the ——— paused, and turned with great courtesy to the Duc de ———, I bowed my way to the Duchesse de B——. That personage, whose liveliness and piquancy of manner always make one wish for one's own sake that her rank was less exalted, was speaking with great volubility to a tall, stupid-looking man, one of the ministers, and smiled most graciously upon me as I drew near. She spoke to me of our national amusements. "You are not," said she, "so fond of dancing as we are."

"We have not the same exalted example to be at once our motive and our model," said I, in allusion to the Duchesse's well-known attachment to that accomplishment. The Duchesse d'A—— came up as I said this, and the conversation flowed on evenly enough till the ———'s whist party was formed. His partner was Madame de la R——, the heroine of La Vendée. She was a tall and very stout woman, singularly lively and entertaining, and appeared to possess both the moral and the physical energy to accomplish feats still more noble than those she performed.

I soon saw that it would not do for me to stay very long. I had already made a favourable impression, and, in such cases, it is my constant rule immediately to retire. Stay, if it be whole hours, until you *have* pleased, but leave the moment *after* your success. A great genius should not

linger too long either in the *salon* or the world. He must quit each with *éclat*. In obedience to this rule, I no sooner found that my court had been effectually made than I rose to withdraw.

"You will return soon to Paris," said the Duchesse de B——.

"I cannot resist it," I replied. "*Mon corps reviendra pour chercher mon cœur.*"

"We shall not forget you," said the Duchesse.

"Your Royal Highness has *now* given me my only inducement *not* to return," I answered, as I bowed out of the room.

It was much too early to go home; at that time I was too young and restless to sleep till long after midnight; and while I was deliberating in what manner to pass the hours, I suddenly recollected the hotel in the Rue St. Honoré, to which Vincent and I had paid so unceremonious a visit the night before. Impressed with the hope that I might be more successful in meeting Warburton than I had then been, I ordered the coachman to drive to the abode of the old Marquis ———.

The *salon* was as crowded as usual. I lost a few Napoleons at *écarté* in order to pay my *entrée*, and then commenced a desultory flirtation with one of the fair decoys. In this occupation my eye and my mind frequently wandered. I could not divest myself of the hope of once more seeing Warburton before my departure from Paris, and every reflection which confirmed my suspicions of his identity redoubled my interest in his connection with Tyrrell and the vulgar *débauché* of the Rue St. Dominique. I was making some languid reply to my Cynthia of the minute, when my ear was suddenly greeted by an English voice. I looked round, and saw Thornton in close conversation with a man whose back was turned to me

* The sketch of these unfortunate members of an exiled and illustrious family may not be the less interesting from the reverses which, since the first publication of this work, placed the Orleans family on the Bourbon throne. As for the erring Charles X., he was neither a great monarch nor a wise man, but he was, in air, grace, and manner, the most thorough-bred gentleman I ever met.—H. P.

but whom I rightly conjectured to be Tyrrell.

"Oh! he'll be here soon," said the former, "and we'll *bleed him* regularly to-night. It is very singular that you who play so much better should not have *floored* him yesterday evening."

Tyrrell replied in a tone so low as to be inaudible, and a minute afterwards the door opened, and Warburton entered. He came up instantly to Thornton and his companion; and after a few words of ordinary salutation, Warburton said, in one of those modulated but artificial tones so peculiar to himself, "I am sure, Tyrrell, that you must be eager for your revenge. To lose to such a mere tyro as myself, is quite enough to double the pain of defeat, and the desire of retaliation."

I did not hear Tyrrell's reply, but the trio presently moved towards the door, which till then I had not noticed, and which was probably the entrance to our hostess's *boudoir*. The *soi-disante* marquise opened it herself, for which kind office Thornton gave her a leer and a wink, characteristic of his claims to gallantry. When the door was again closed upon them, I went up to the marquise, and after a few compliments, asked whether the room *Messieurs les Anglais* had entered was equally open to all guests?

"Why," said she, with a slight hesitation, "those gentlemen play for higher stakes than we usually do here, and one of them is apt to get irritated by the advice and expostulations of the lookers-on; and so after they had played a short time in the *salon* last night, Monsieur Thornton, a very old friend of mine, (here the lady looked down,) asked me permission to occupy the inner room; and as I knew him so well, I could have no scruple in obliging him."

"Then, I suppose," said I, "that as a stranger, I have not permission to intrude upon them?"

"Shall I inquire?" answered the marquise.

"No!" said I, "it is not worth while;" and accordingly I re-seated myself, and appeared once more occupied in saying *des belles choses* to my kind-hearted neighbour. I could not, however, with all my dissimulation, sustain a conversation from which my present feelings were so estranged, for more than a few minutes; and I was never more glad than when my companion, displeased with my inattention, rose, and left me to my own reflections.

What could Warburton (if he were the person I suspected) gain by the disguise he had assumed? He was too rich to profit by any sums he could win from Tyrrell, and too much removed from Thornton's station in life, to derive any pleasure or benefit from his acquaintance with that person. His dark threats of vengeance in the *Jardin des Plantes*, and his reference to the two hundred pounds Tyrrell possessed, gave me, indeed, some clue as to his real object; but then—why this disguise! Had he known Tyrrell before, in his proper semblance, and had anything passed between them, which rendered this concealment now expedient?—this, indeed, seemed probable enough; but, was Thornton entrusted with the secret?—and, if revenge was the object, was that low man a partaker in its execution?—or was he not, more probably, playing the traitor to both? As for Tyrrell himself, his own designs upon Warburton were sufficient to prevent pity for any fall into the pit he had digged for others.

Meanwhile, time passed on, the hour grew late, and the greater part of the guests were gone; still I could not tear myself away; I looked from time to time at the door, with an indescribable feeling of anxiety. I longed, yet dreaded, for it to open; I felt as if my own fate were in some

degree implicated in what was then agitating within, and I could not resolve to depart, until I had formed some conclusions on the result.

At length the door opened; Tyrrell came forth—his countenance was perfectly hueless, his cheek was sunk and hollow, the excitement of two hours had been sufficient to render it so. I observed that his teeth were set, and his hand clenched, as they are when we idly seek, by the strained and extreme tension of the nerves, to sustain the fever and the agony of the mind. Warburton and Thornton followed him; the latter with his usual air of reckless indifference—his quick rolling eye glanced from the marquis to myself, and though his colour changed slightly, his nod of recognition was made with its wonted impudence and ease; but Warburton passed on, like Tyrrell, without noticing or heeding anything around. He fixed his large bright eye upon the figure which preceded him, without once altering its direction, and the extreme beauty of his features, which, not all the dishevelled length of his hair and whiskers could disguise, was lighted up with a joyous but savage expression, which made me turn away, almost with a sensation of fear.

Just as Tyrrell was leaving the room, Warburton put his hand upon his shoulder—"Stay," said he, "I am going your way, and will accompany you." He turned round to Thornton (who was already talking with the marquis) as he said this, and waved his hand, as if to prevent his following; the next moment, Tyrrell and himself had left the room.

I could not now remain longer. I felt a feverish restlessness, which impelled me onwards. I quitted the *salon*, and was on the staircase before the gamblers had descended. Warburton was, indeed, but a few steps

before me; the stairs were but very dimly lighted by one expiring lamp; he did not turn round to see me, and was probably too much engrossed to hear me.

"You may yet have a favourable reverse," said he to Tyrrell.

"Impossible!" replied the latter, in a tone of such deep anguish, that it thrilled me to the very heart. "I am an utter beggar—I have nothing in the world—I have no expectation but to starve!"

While he was saying this, I perceived by the faint and uncertain light, that Warburton's hand was raised to his own countenance.

"Have you *no* hope—no spot wherein to look for comfort—is beggary your absolute and only possible resource from famine?" he replied, in a low and suppressed tone.

At that moment we were just descending into the court-yard. Warburton was but one step behind Tyrrell: the latter made no answer; but as he passed from the dark staircase into the clear moonlight of the court, I caught a glimpse of the big tears which rolled heavily and silently down his cheeks. Warburton laid his hand upon him.

"Turn," he cried, suddenly, "your cup is not yet full—look upon me—and *remember!*"

I pressed forward—the light shone full upon the countenance of the speaker—the dark hair was gone—my suspicions were true—I discovered at one glance the bright locks and lofty brow of Reginald Glanville. Slowly Tyrrell gazed, as if he were endeavouring to repel some terrible remembrance, which gathered, with every instant, more fearfully upon him; until, as the stern countenance of Glanville grew darker and darker in its mingled scorn and defiance, he uttered one low cry, and sank senseless upon the earth.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Well, he is gone, and with him go these thoughts.—SHAKESPEARE

What ho ! for England !—*Ibid.*

I HAVE always had an insuperable horror of being placed in what the vulgar call a *predicament*. In a predicament I was most certainly placed at the present moment. A man at my feet in a fit—the cause of it having very wisely disappeared, devolving upon me the charge of watching, recovering, and conducting home the afflicted person—made a concatenation of disagreeable circumstances, as much unsuited to the temper of Henry Pelham, as his evil fortune could possibly have contrived.

After a short pause of deliberation, I knocked up the porter, procured some cold water, and bathed Tyrrell's temples for several moments before he recovered. He opened his eyes slowly, and looked carefully round with a fearful and suspicious glance : "Gone—gone—(he muttered)—ay—what did he here at such a moment ?—vengeance—for what ? I could not tell it would have killed her—let him thank his own folly. I do not fear ; I defy his malice." And with these words Tyrrell sprung to his feet.

"Can I assist you to your home ?" said I ; "you are still unwell—pray suffer me to have that pleasure."

I spoke with some degree of warmth and sincerity ; the unfortunate man stared wildly at me for a moment, before he replied. "Who," said he, at last, "who speaks to *me*—the lost—the guilty—the ruined, in the accents of interest and kindness ?"

I placed his arm in mine, and drew him out of the yard into the open street. He looked at me with an

eager and wistful survey, and then, by degrees, appearing to recover his full consciousness of the present, and recollection of the past, he pressed my hand warmly, and after a short silence, during which we moved on slowly towards the Tuileries, he said,—"Pardon me, sir, if I have not sufficiently thanked you for your kindness and attention. I am now quite restored ; the close room in which I have been sitting for so many hours, and the feverish excitement of play, acting upon a frame much debilitated by ill health, occasioned my momentary indisposition. I am now, I repeat, quite recovered, and will no longer trespass upon your good nature."

"Really," said I, "you had better not discard my services yet. Do suffer me to accompany you home ?"

"Home !" muttered Tyrrell, with a deep sigh ; "no—no !" and then, as if recollecting himself, he said, "I thank you, sir, but—but—"

I saw his embarrassment, and interrupted him.

"Well, if I cannot assist you any further, I will take your dismissal. I trust we shall meet again under auspices better calculated for improving acquaintance."

Tyrrell bowed, once more pressed my hand, and we parted. I hurried on up the long street towards my hotel.

When I had got several paces beyond Tyrrell, I turned back to look at him. He was standing in the same place in which I had left him.

I saw by the moonlight that his face and hands were raised towards Heaven. It was but for a moment: his attitude changed while I was yet looking, and he slowly and calmly continued his way in the same direction as myself. When I reached my chambers, I hastened immediately to bed, but not to sleep: the extraordinary scene I had witnessed; the dark and ferocious expression of Glanville's countenance, so strongly impressed with every withering and deadly passion; the fearful and unaccountable remembrance that had seemed to gather over the livid and varying face of the gamester; the mystery of Glanville's disguise; the intensity of a revenge so terribly expressed, together with the restless and burning anxiety I felt—not from idle curiosity, but, from my early and intimate friendship for Glanville, to fathom its cause—all crowded upon my mind with a feverish confusion, that effectually banished repose.

It was with that singular sensation of pleasure which none but those who have passed frequent nights in restless and painful agitation, can recognise, that I saw the bright sun penetrate through my shutters, and heard Bedos move across my room.

"What hour will Monsieur have the post-horses?" said that praise-worthy valet.

"At eleven," answered I, springing out of bed with joy at the change of scene which the very mention of my journey brought before my mind.

I was turning listlessly, as I sate at

breakfast over the pages of Galignani's Messenger, when the following paragraph caught my attention:—

"It is rumoured among the circles of the Faubourg that a duel was fought on —, between a young Englishman and Monsieur D—; the cause of it is said to be the pretensions of both to the beautiful Duchesse de P—, who, if report be true, cares for neither of the gallants, but lavishes her favours upon a certain *attaché* to the English embassy."

"Such," thought I, "are the materials for all human histories. Every one who reads, will eagerly swallow this account as true: if an author were writing the memoirs of the court, he would compile his facts and scandal from this very collection of records; and yet, though so near the truth, how totally false it is! Thank Heaven, however, that, at least, I am not suspected of the degradation of the duchess's love:—to fight for her may make me seem a fool—to be loved by her would constitute me a villain."

"The horses, sir!" said Bedos; and "The bill, sir!" said the *garçon*. Alas! that *those* and *that* should be so coupled together; and that we can never take our departure without such awful witnesses of our sojourn. Well—to be brief—the bill for once was discharged—the horses snorted—the carriage-door was opened—I entered—Bedos mounted behind—crack went the whips—off went the steeds, and so terminated my adventures at dear Paris

CHAPTER XXXII.

O, cousin, you know him—the fine gentleman they talk of so much in town.

WYCHERLY'S *Dancing Master*.

By the bright days of my youth, there is something truly delightful in the quick motion of four, ay, or even two post-horses! In France, where one's steeds are none of the swiftest, the pleasures of travelling are not quite so great as in England; still, however, to a man who is tired of one scene—panting for another—in love with excitement, and yet not wearied of its pursuit—the turnpike-road is more grateful than the easiest chair ever invented, and the little prison we entitle a carriage, more cheerful than the state rooms of Devonshire House.

We reached Calais in safety, and in good time, the next day.

"Will Monsieur dine in his rooms, or at the *table d'hôte*?"

"In his rooms, of course," said Bedos, indignantly deciding the question. A French valet's dignity is always involved in his master's.

"You are too good, Bedos," said I, "I shall dine at the *table d'hôte*—whom have you there in general?"

"Really," said the *garçon*, "we have such a swift succession of guests, that we seldom see the same faces two days running. We have as many changes as an English administration."

"You are facetious," said I.

"No," returned the *garçon*, who was a philosopher as well as a wit; "no, my digestive organs are very weak, and *par conséquent*, I am naturally melancholy—*Ah, ma foi, très triste!*" and with these words the sentimental plate-changer placed his hand— I can scarcely say, whether on

his heart, or his stomach, and sighed bitterly!

"How long," said I, "does it want to dinner?" My question restored the *garçon* to himself.

"Two hours, Monsieur, two hours," and twirling his *serviette* with an air of exceeding importance, off went my melancholy acquaintance to compliment new customers, and complain of his digestion.

After I had arranged my *toilette*—yawned three times, and drunk two bottles of soda-water, I strolled into the town. As I was sauntering along leisurely enough, I heard my name pronounced behind me. I turned, and saw Sir Willoughby Townshend, an old baronet of an antediluvian age—a fossil witness of the wonders of England, before the deluge of French manners swept away ancient customs, and created, out of the wrecks of what had been, a new order of things, and a new race of mankind.

"Ah! my dear Mr. Pelham, how are you? and the worthy Lady Frances, your mother, and your excellent father, all well?—I'm delighted to hear it. Russelton," continued Sir Willoughby, turning to a middle-aged man, whose arm he held, "you remember Pelham—true Whig—great friend of Sheridan's?—let me introduce his son to you. Mr. Russelton, Mr. Pelham; Mr. Pelham, Mr. Russelton."

At the name of the person thus introduced to me, a thousand recollections crowded upon my mind; the contemporary and rival of Napoleon—the autocrat of the great world of fashion and cravats—the mighty

genius before whom aristocracy hath been humbled and *ton* abashed—at whose nod the haughtiest *noblesse* of Europe had quailed—who had introduced, by a single example, starch into neckcloths, and had fed the pampered appetite of his boot-tops on champagne—whose coat and whose friend were cut with an equal grace—and whose name was connected with every triumph that the world's great virtue of audacity could achieve—the illustrious, the immortal Russelton, stood before me! I recognised in him a congenial, though a superior spirit, and I bowed with a profundity of veneration, with which no other human being has ever inspired me.

Mr. Russelton seemed pleased with my evident respect, and returned my salutation with a mock dignity which enchanted me. He offered me his disengaged arm; I took it with transport, and we all three proceeded up the street.

"So," said Sir Willoughby—"so, Russelton, you like your quarters here; plenty of sport among the English, I should think: you have not forgot the art of quizzing; eh, old fellow?"

"Even if I had," said Mr. Russelton, speaking very slowly, "the sight of Sir Willoughby Townshend would be quite sufficient to refresh my memory. Yes," continued the venerable wreck, after a short pause—"yes, I like my residence pretty well; I enjoy a calm conscience, and a clean shirt: what more can man desire? I have made acquaintance with a tame parrot, and I have taught it to say, whenever an English fool with a stiff neck and a loose swagger passes him—'True Briton—true Briton.' I take care of my health, and reflect upon old age. I have read *Gil Blas*, and the *Whole Duty of Man*; and, in short, what with instructing my parrot, and improving myself, I think I pass my time as creditably and decorously as

the Bishop of Winchester, or my Lord of A—— himself. So you have just come from Paris, I presume, Mr. Pelham?"

"I left it yesterday!"

"Full of those horrid English, I suppose; thrusting their broad hats and narrow minds into every shop in the *Palais Royal*—winking their dull eyes at the damsels of the counter, and manufacturing their notions of French into a higgles for *sous*. Oh! the monsters!—they bring on a bilious attack whenever I think of them: the other day one of them accosted me, and talked me into a nervous fever about patriotism and roast pigs: luckily I was near my own house, and reached it before the thing became fatal; but only think, had I wandered too far when he met me! at my time of life, the shock would have been too great; I should certainly have perished in a fit. I hope, at least, they would have put the cause of my death in my epitaph—'Died, of an Englishman, John Russelton, Esq., aged, &c. Pah! You are not engaged, Mr. Pelham; dine with me to-day; Willoughby and his umbrella are coming.'"

"*Volontiers*," said I, "though I was going to make observations on men and manners at the *table d'hôte* of my hotel."

"I am most truly grieved," replied Mr. Russelton, "at depriving you of so much amusement. With me you will only find some tolerable Lafitte, and an anomalous dish my *cuisinière* calls a mutton chop. It will be curious to see what variation in the monotony of mutton she will adopt to-day. The first time I ordered 'a chop,' I thought I had amply explained every necessary particular; a certain portion of flesh, and a gridiron: at seven o'clock up came a *côtelette panée*! *Faute de mieux*, I swallowed the composition, drowned as it was in a most pernicious sauce. I had one hour's sleep, and

the nightmare, in consequence. The next day, I imagined no mistake *could* be made: sauce was strictly prohibited; all extra ingredients laid under a most special veto, and a natural gravy gently recommended: the cover was removed, and lo! a breast of mutton, all bone and gristle, like the dying gladiator! This time my heart was too full for wrath; I sat down and wept! To-day will be the third time I shall make the experiment, if French cooks will consent to let one starve upon nature. For my part, I have no stomach left now for art: I wore out my digestion in youth, swallowing Jack St. Leger's suppers, and Sheridan's promises to pay. Pray, Mr. Pelham, did you try Staub when you were at Paris?"

"Yes; and thought him one degree better than Stultz, whom, indeed, I have long condemned, as fit only for minors at Oxford, and majors in the infantry."

"True," said Russelton, with a very faint smile at a pun, somewhat in his own way, and levelled at a tradesman, of whom he was, perhaps, a little jealous—"True; Stultz aims at making

gentlemen, not *coats*; there is a degree of aristocratic pretension in his stitches, which is vulgar to an appalling degree. You can tell a Stultz coat any where, which is quite enough to damn it: the moment a man's known by an invariable cut, and that not original, it ought to be all over with him. Give me the man who makes the tailor, not the tailor who makes the man."

"Right, by Jove!" cried Sir Willoughby, who was as badly dressed as one of Sir E——'s dinners. "Right; just my opinion. I have always told my Schneiders to make my clothes neither in the fashion nor out of it; to copy no other man's coat, and to cut their cloth according to my natural body, not according to an isosceles triangle. Look at this coat, for instance," and Sir Willoughby Townshend made a dead halt, that we might admire his garment the more accurately.

"Coat!" said Russelton, with an appearance of the most *naïve* surprise, and taking hold of the collar, suspiciously, by the finger and thumb; "coat, Sir Willoughby! do you call *this thing a coat?*" ✓

CHAPTER XXXIII.

J'ai toujours cru que le bon n'étoit que le beau mis en action.—ROUSSEAU.

✓ SHORTLY after Russelton's answer to Sir Willoughby's eulogistic observations on his own attire, I left those two worthies till I was to join them at dinner: it wanted three hours yet to that time, and I repaired to my quarters to bathe and write letters. I scribbled one to Madame D'Anville, full of antitheses and maxims, sure to charm her; another to my mother, to prepare her for my arrival; and a third to Lord Vincent, giving him certain commissions at Paris, which I had forgotten personally to execute.

My pen is not that of a ready writer; and what with yawning, stretching, and putting pen to paper, it was time to bathe and dress before my letters were completed. I set off to Russelton's abode in high spirits, and fully resolved to make the most of a character so original.

It was a very small room in which I found him; he was stretched in an easy chair before the fire-place, gazing complacently at his feet, and apparently occupied in anything but listening to Sir Willoughby Townshend,

who was talking with great vehemence about politics and the corn-laws. Notwithstanding the heat of the weather, there was a small fire on the hearth, which, aided by the earnestness of his efforts to convince his host, put poor Sir Willoughby into a most intense perspiration. Russelton, however, seemed enviably cool, and hung over the burning wood like a cucumber on a hotbed. Sir Willoughby came to a full stop by the window, and (gasping for breath) attempted to throw it open.

"What are you doing? for Heaven's sake, what are you doing?" cried Russelton, starting up; "do you mean to kill me?"

"Kill you!" said Sir Willoughby, quite aghast.

"Yes; kill me! is it not quite cold enough already in this d—d seafaring place, without making my only retreat, humble as it is, a theatre for thorough draughts? Have I not had the rheumatism in my left shoulder, and the ague in my little finger, these last six months? and must you now terminate my miserable existence at one blow, by opening that abominable lattice? Do you think, because your great frame, fresh from the Yorkshire wolds, and compacted of such materials, that one would think, in eating your heeves, you had digested their hide into skin—do you think, because your limbs might be cut up into planks for a seventy-eight, and warranted waterproof without pitch, because of the density of their pores—do you think, because you are as impervious as an araphorostic shoe, that I, John Russelton, am equally impenetrable, and that you are to let easterly winds play about my room like children, begetting rheums and asthmas and all manner of catarrhs? I do beg, Sir Willoughby Townshend, that you will suffer me to die a more natural and civilised death;" and so saying, Russelton sank down into his chair,

apparently in the last stage of exhaustion.

Sir Willoughby, who remembered the humourist in all his departed glory, and still venerated him as a temple where the deity yet breathed, though the altar was overthrown, made to this extraordinary remonstrance no other reply than a long *whiff*, and a "Well, Russelton, da ume but you're a queer fellow."

Russelton now turned to me, and invited me, with a tone of the most lady-like languor, to sit down near the fire. As I am naturally of a chilly disposition, and fond, too, of beating people in their own line, I drew a chair close to the hearth, declared the weather was very cold, and requested permission to ring the bell for some more wood. Russelton stared for a moment, and then, with a politeness he had not deigned to exert before, approached his chair to mine, and began a conversation, which, in spite of his bad witticisms, and peculiarity of manner, I found singularly entertaining.

Dinner was announced, and we adjourned to another room:—poor Sir Willoughby, with his waistcoat unbuttoned, and breathing like a pug in a phthisis—groaned bitterly, when he discovered that this apartment was smaller and hotter than the one before. Russelton immediately helped him to some scalding soup—and said, as he told the servant to hand Sir Willoughby the cayenne, "you will find this, my dear Townshend, a very sensible *potage* for this severe season."

Dinner went off tamely enough, with the exception of "our fat friend's" agony, which Russelton enjoyed most luxuriously. The threatened mutton chops did not make their appearance, and the dinner, though rather too small, was excellently cooked, and better arranged. With the dessert, the poor baronet rose, and pleading

sudden indisposition, tottered out of the door.

When he was gone, Russelton threw himself back in his chair, and laughed for several minutes with a low chuckling sound, till the tears ran down his cheek.

After a few jests at Sir Willoughby, our conversation turned upon other individuals. I soon saw that Russelton was a soured and disappointed man; his remarks on people were all sarcasms—his mind was overflowed with a suffusion of ill-nature—he bit as well as growled. No man of the world ever, I am convinced, becomes a real philosopher in retirement. People who have been employed for years upon trifles have not the greatness of mind which could alone make them indifferent to what they have coveted all their lives, as most enviable and important.

"Have you read —'s memoirs?" said Mr. Russelton. "No! Well, I imagined every one had at least dipped into them. I have often had serious thoughts of dignifying my own retirement, by the literary employment of detailing my adventures in the world. I think I could throw a new light upon things and persons, which my contemporaries will shrink back like owls at perceiving."

"Your life," said I, "must indeed furnish matter of equal instruction and amusement."

"Ay," answered Russelton: "amusement to the fools, but instruction to the knaves. I am, indeed, a lamentable example of the fall of ambition. I brought starch into all the neckcloths in England, and I end by tying my own at a three-inch looking-glass at Calais. You are a young man, Mr. Pelham, about to commence life, probably with the same views as (though greater advantages than) myself; perhaps, in indulging my egotism, I shall not weary without recompensing you.

"I came into the world with an

inordinate love of glory, and a great admiration of the original; these propensities might have made me a Shakspeare—they did more, they made me a Russelton! When I was six years old, I cut my jacket into a coat, and turned my aunt's best petticoat into a waistcoat. I disdained at eight the language of the vulgar, and when my father asked me to fetch his slippers, I replied, that my soul swelled beyond the limits of a lackey's. At nine, I was self-inoculated with propriety of ideas. I rejected malt with the air of His Majesty, and formed a violent affection for maraschino; though starving at school, I never took twice of pudding, and paid sixpence a week out of my shilling to have my shoes blacked. As I grew up, my notions expanded. I gave myself, without restraint, to the ambition that burnt within me—I cut my old friends, who were rather envious than emulous of my genius, and I employed three tradesmen to make my gloves—one for the hand, a second for the fingers, and a third for the thumb! These two qualities made me courted and admired by a new race—for the great secrets of being courted are to shun others, and seem delighted with yourself. The latter is obvious enough; who the deuce *should* be pleased with you, if you are not pleased with yourself?

"Before I left college I fell in love. Other fellows, at my age, in such a predicament, would have whined—shaved only twice a week, and written verses. I did none of the three—the last indeed I tried, but, to my infinite surprise, I found my genius was not universal. I began with

'Sweet nymph, for whom I wake my muse.'

"For this, after considerable hammering, I could only think of the rhyme '*shoes*'—so I began again,—

'by praise demands much softer lutes.

And the fellow of this verse terminated like myself in 'boots.'—Other efforts were equally successful—'bloom' suggested to my imagination no rhyme but 'perfume!'—'despair' only reminded me of my 'hair,'—and 'hope' was met, at the end of the second verse, by the inharmonious antithesis of '*soup*.' Finding, therefore, that my *forte* was not in the Pierian line, I redoubled my attention to my dress; I *coated* and *cravatted* with all the attention the very inspiration of my rhymes seemed to advise;—in short, I thought the best pledge I could give my Duleinea of my passion for her person, would be to show her what adorationate veneration I could pay to my own.

"My mistress could not withhold from me her admiration, but she denied me her love. She confessed Mr. Russelton was the best dressed man at the University, and had the whitest hands; and two days after this avowal, she ran away with a great rosy-cheeked extract from Leicestershire.

"I did not blame her: I pitied her too much—but I made a vow never to be in love again. In spite of all advantages I kept my oath, and avenged myself on the species for the insult of the individual.

"Before I commenced a part which was to continue through life, I considered deeply on the humours of the spectators. I saw that the character of the more fashionable of the English was servile to rank, and yielding to pretension—they admire you for your acquaintance, and cringe to you for your conceit. The first thing, therefore, was to know great people—the second to control them. I dressed well, and had good horses—that was sufficient to make me sought by the young of my own sex. I talked scandal, and was never abashed—that was more than enough to make me admired among the matrons of the

other. It is single men, and married women, to whom are given the St. Peter's keys of Society. I was soon admitted into its heaven—I was more—I was one of its saints. I became imitated as well as initiated. I was the rage—the lion. Why?—was I better—was I richer—was I handsomer—was I cleverer, than my kind? No, no;—(and here Russelton ground his teeth with a strong and wrathful expression of scorn);—and had I been all—had I been a very concentration and monopoly of all human perfections, they would not have valued me at half the price they *did* set on me. It was—I will tell you the simple secret, Mr. Pelham—it was because I *trampled on them*, that, like crushed herbs, they sent up a grateful incense in return.

"Oh! it was balm to my bitter and loathing temper, to see those who would have spurned *me* from them, if they dared, writhe beneath my lash, as I withheld or inflicted it at will. I was the magician who held the great spirits that longed to tear me to pieces, by one simple spell which a superior hardihood had won me—and, by Heaven, I did not spare to exert it.

"Well, well, this is but an idle recollection now; all human power, says the proverb of every language, is but of short duration. Alexander did not conquer kingdoms for ever; and Russelton's good fortune deserted him at last. Napoleon died in exile, and so shall I; but we have both had our day, and mine was the brightest of the two, for it had no change till the evening. I am more happy than people would think for—*Je ne suis pas souvent où mon corps est*—I live in a world of recollections, I trample again upon coronets and ermine, the glories of the small great! I give once more laws which no libertine is so hardy as not to feel exalted in adopting; I hold my court, and issue

my fiats; I am like the madman, and out of the very straws of my cell, I make my subjects and my realm; and when I wake from these bright visions, and see myself an old, deserted man, forgotten, and decaying inch by inch in a foreign village, I can at least summon sufficient of my ancient regality of spirit not to sink beneath the reverse. If I am inclined to be melancholy, why, I extinguish my fire, and imagine I have demolished a duchess. I steal up to my solitary chamber, to renew again, in my sleep, the phantoms of my youth; to carouse with princes; to legislate for nobles; and to wake in the morning (here Russelton's countenance and manner suddenly changed to an affectation of methodical gravity), and thank Heaven that I have still a coat to my stomach, as well as to my back, and that I am safely delivered of such villainous company; 'to forswear sack and live

cleanly,' during the rest of my sublunary existence."

After this long detail of Mr. Russelton's, the conversation was but dull and broken. I could not avoid indulging a reverie upon what I had heard, and my host was evidently still revolving the recollections his narration had conjured up; we sat opposite each other for several minutes, as abstracted and distracted as if we had been a couple two months married; till at last I rose, and tendered my adieus. Russelton received them with his usual coldness, but more than his usual civility, for he followed me to the door.

Just as they were about to shut it, he called me back. "Mr. Pelham," said he, "Mr. Pelham, when you come back this way, do look in upon me, and—and as you will be going a good deal into society, *just find out what people say of my manner of life!*" *

CHAPTER XXXIV.

An old worshipful gentleman, that had a great estate,
And kept a brave old house at a hospitable rate.—*Old Song.*

I THINK I may, without much loss to the reader, pass in silence over my voyage, the next day, to Dover. (Horrible reminiscence!) I may also spare him an exact detail of all the inns and impositions between that sea-port and London; nor will it be absolutely necessary to the plot of this history, to linger over every milestone between the metropolis and Glenmorris Castle, where my uncle and my mother were impatiently awaiting the arrival of the candidate to be.

It was a fine bright evening when my carriage entered the park. I had not seen the place for years; and I felt my heart swell with something

like family pride, as I gazed on the magnificent extent of hill and plain that opened upon me, as I passed the ancient and ivy-covered lodge. Large groups of trees, scattered on either side, seemed, in their own antiquity, the witness of that of the family which had given them existence. The sun set on the waters which lay

* It will be perceived by those readers who are kind or patient enough to reach the conclusion of this work, that Russelton is specified as one of my few dramatis personæ of which only the *first* outline is taken from real life, and from a very noted personage; all the rest—all, indeed, which forms and marks the character thus briefly delineated, is drawn *solely* from imagination.

gathered in a lake at the foot of the hill, breaking the waves into unnumbered sapphires, and tinging the dark firs that overspread the margin, with a rich and golden light, that put me excessively in mind of the Duke of ——'s livery!

When I descended at the gate, the servants, who stood arranged in an order so long that it almost startled me, received me with a visible gladness and animation, which showed me, at one glance, the old-fashioned tastes of their master. Who, in these days, ever inspires his servants with a single sentiment of regard or interest for himself or his whole race? That tribe one never, indeed, considers as possessing a life separate from their services to us: beyond that purpose of existence, we know not even if they exist. As Providence made the stars for the benefit of earth, so it made servants for the use of gentlemen; and, as neither stars nor servants appear except when we want them, so I suppose they are in a sort of suspense from *being*, except at those important and happy moments.

To return—for if I have any fault, it is too great a love for abstruse speculation and reflection—I was formally ushered through a great hall, hung round with huge antlers and rusty armour, through a lesser one, supported by large stone columns, and without any other adornment than the arms of the family; then through an anti-room, covered with tapestry, representing the gallantries of King Solomon to the Queen of Sheba; and lastly, into the apartment honoured by the august presence of Lord Glenmorris. That personage was dividing the sofa with three spaniels and a setter; he rose hastily when I was announced, and then checking the first impulse which hurried him, perhaps, into an unseemly warmth of salutation, held out

his hand with a stately air of kindly protection, and while he pressed mine, surveyed me from head to foot, to see how far my appearance justified his condescension.

Having, at last, satisfied himself, he proceeded to inquire after the state of my appetite. He smiled benignantly when I confessed that I was excessively well prepared to testify its capacities (the first idea of all kind-hearted, old-fashioned people, is to stuff you), and, silently motioning to the grey-headed servant who stood in attendance, till, receiving the expected sign, he withdrew, Lord Glenmorris informed me that dinner was over for every one but myself, that for me it would be prepared in an instant, that Mr. Toolington had expired four days since, that my mother was, at that moment, canvassing for me, and that my own electioneering qualities were to open their exhibition with the following day.

After this communication there was a short pause. "What a beautiful place this is!" said I, with great enthusiasm. Lord Glenmorris was pleased with the compliment, simple as it was.

"Yes," said he, "it is, and I have made it still more so than you have yet been able to perceive."

"You have been planting, probably, on the other side of the park?"

"No," said my uncle, smiling; "Nature had done every thing for this spot when I came to it, but one; and the addition of that one ornament is the only real triumph which art ever can achieve."

"What is it?" asked I; "oh, I know—water."

"You are mistaken," answered Lord Glenmorris; "it is the ornament of—*happy faces*."

I looked up to my uncle's countenance in sudden surprise. I cannot explain how I was struck with the

expression which it wore: so calmly bright and open!—it was as if the very daylight had settled there.

"You don't understand this at present, Henry," said he, after a moment's silence; "but you will find it, of all rules for the improvement of property, the easiest to learn. Enough of this now. Were you not in despair at leaving Paris?"

"I should have been, some months ago; but when I received my mother's summons, I found the temptations of the continent very light in comparison with those held out to me here."

"What, have you already arrived at that great epoch, when vanity casts off its *first* skin, and ambition succeeds to pleasure? Why—but

thank Heaven that you have lost my moral—your dinner is announced."

Most devoutly *did* I thank Heaven, and most earnestly did I betake myself to do honour to my uncle's hospitality.

I had just finished my repast, when my mother entered. She was, as you might well expect from her maternal affection, quite overpowered with joy, *first*, at finding my hair grown so much darker, and, *secondly*, at my looking so well. We spent the whole evening in discussing the great business for which I had been summoned. Lord Glenmorris promised me money, and my mother advice; and I, in my turn, enchanted them, by promising to make the best use of both.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Cor. Your good voice, sir—what say you!

2nd Cit. You shall have it, worthy sir.—*Coriolanus.*

THE borough of Buyemall had long been in undisputed possession of the Lords of Glenmorris, till a rich banker, of the name of Lufton, had bought a large estate in the immediate neighbourhood of Glenmorris Castle. This event, which was the precursor of a mighty revolution in the borough of Buyemall, took place in the first year of my uncle's accession to his property. A few months afterwards, a vacancy in the borough occurring, my uncle procured the nomination of one of his own political party. To the great astonishment of Lord Glenmorris, and the great gratification of the burghers of Buyemall, Mr. Lufton offered himself in opposition to the Glenmorris candidate. In this age of enlightenment, innovation has no respect for the most sacred institutions of antiquity. The burghers, for the only time since their creation as a body, were cast first

into doubt, and secondly into rebellion. The Lufton faction, *horresco referens*, were triumphant, and the rival candidate was returned. From that hour the Borough of Buyemall was open to all the world.

My uncle, who was a good easy man, and had some strange notions of free representation, and liberty of election, professed to care very little for this event. He contented himself, henceforward, with exerting his interest for one of the members, and left the other seat entirely at the disposal of the line of Lufton, which, from the time of the first competition, continued peaceably to monopolise it.

During the last two years, my uncle's candidate, the late Mr. Toolington, had been gradually dying of a dropsy, and the Luftons had been so *particularly* attentive to the honest burghers, that it was shrewdly suspected a bold push was to be made

for the other seat. During the last month these doubts were changed into certainty. Mr. Augustus Leopold Lufton, eldest son to Benjamin Lufton, Esq., had publicly declared his intention of starting at the decease of Mr. Toolington; against this personage behold myself armed and arrayed.

Such is, in brief, the history of the borough, up to the time in which I was to take a prominent share in its interests and events.

On the second day after my arrival at the castle, the following advertisement appeared at Buyemall:—

“To the Independent Electors of the Borough of Buyemall.

“GENTLEMEN,

✓ In presenting myself to your notice, I advance a claim not altogether new and unfounded. My family have for centuries been residing amongst you, and exercising that interest which reciprocal confidence, and good offices, may fairly create. Should it be my good fortune to be chosen your representative, you may rely upon my utmost endeavours to deserve that honour. One word upon the principles I espouse: they are those which have found their advocates among the wisest and the best: they are those which, hostile alike to the encroachments of the crown, and the licentiousness of the people, would support the real interests of both. Upon these grounds, gentlemen, I have the honour to solicit your votes; and it is with the sincerest respect for your ancient and honourable body, that I subscribe myself your very obedient servant,

“HENRY PELHAM.”

“Glenmorris Castle,” &c. &c.

Such was the first public signification of my intentions; it was drawn up by Mr. Sharpon, our lawyer, and considered by our friends as a masterpiece: for, as my mother sagely ob-

served, it did not commit me in a single instance—espoused no principle, and yet professed principles which all parties would allow were the best.

At the first house where I called, the proprietor was a clergyman of good family, who had married a lady from Baker-street: of course the Reverend Combermere St. Quintin and his wife valued themselves upon being “*genteel*.” I arrived at an unlucky moment; on entering the hall, a dirty footboy was carrying a yellowware dish of potatoes into the back room. Another Ganyrmede (a sort of footboy-major), who opened the door, and who was still “*settling himself into his coat*,” which he had slipped on at my tintinnabulary summons, ushered me with a mouth full of bread and cheese into this said back room. I gave up everything as lost, when I entered, and saw the lady helping her youngest child to some ineffable trash, which I have since heard is called “blackberry pudding.” Another of the tribe was bawling out, with a loud, hungry tone—“A tatoe, pa!” The father himself was carving for the little group, with a napkin stuffed into the top button-hole of his waistcoat, and the mother, with a long bib, plentifully bespattered with congealing gravy, and the nectarian liquor of the “blackberry pudding,” was sitting, with a sort of presiding complacency, on a high stool, like Juno on Olympus, enjoying rather than stilling the confused hubbub of the little domestic deities, who ate, clattered, spattered, and squabbled around her.

Amidst all this din and confusion, the candidate for the borough of Buyemall was ushered into the household privacy of the *genteel* Mr. and Mrs. St. Quintin. Up started the lady at the sound of my name. The Rev. Combermere St. Quintin seemed frozen into stone. The plate between the youngest child and the blackberry-pudding stood as still as the sun in

Ajalon. The morsel between the mouth of the elder boy and his fork had a respite from mastication. The Seven Sleepers could not have been spell-bound more suddenly and completely.

"Ah" cried I, advancing eagerly, with an air of serious and yet abrupt gladness; "how lucky that I should find you all at luncheon. I was up and had finished breakfast so early this morning that I am half famished. Only think how fortunate, Hardy, (turning round to one of the members of my committee, who accompanied me); I was just saying what would I not give to find Mr. St. Quintin at luncheon. Will you allow me, Madam, to make one of your party?"

Mrs. St. Quintin coloured and faltered, and muttered out something which I was fully resolved *not* to hear. I took a chair, looked round the table, not *too* attentively, and said—"Cold veal; ah! ah! nothing I like so much. May I trouble you, Mr. St. Quintin?—Hollo, my little man, let's see if you can't give me a potato. There's a brave fellow. How old are you, my young hero?—to look at your mother, I should say two, to look at *you*, six."

"He is four next May," said his mother, colouring, and this time *not* painfully.

"Indeed?" said I, surveying him earnestly; and then, in a graver tone, I turned to the Rev. Combermere with—"I think you have a branch of your family still settled in France. I met a St. Quintin (the Duc de Poitiers) abroad."

"Yes," said Mr. Combermere, "yes, the name is still in Normandy, but I was not aware of the title."

"No!" said I, with surprise; "and yet (with another look at the boy), it is astonishing how long family likenesses last. I was a great favourite with all the Duc's children. Do you

know, I must trouble you for some more veal, it is so very good, and I am so very hungry."

"How long have you been abroad?" said Mrs. St. Quintin, who had slipped off her bib, and smoothed her ringlets; for which purposes I had been most adroitly looking in an opposite direction the last three minutes.

"About seven or eight months. The fact is, that the continent only does for us English people to see—not to inhabit; and yet, there are some advantages there, Mr. St. Quintin!—among others, that of the due respect ancient birth is held in. Here, you know, 'money makes the man,' as the vulgar proverb has it?"

"Yes," said Mr. St. Quintin, with a sigh, "it is really dreadful to see those upstarts rising around us, and throwing every thing that is respectable and ancient into the back ground. Dangerous times these, Mr. Pelham—dangerous times; nothing but innovation upon the most sacred institutions. I am sure, Mr. Pelham, that your principles must be decidedly against these new-fashioned doctrines, which lead to nothing but anarchy and confusion—absolutely nothing."

"I'm delighted to find you so much of my opinion!" said I. "I cannot endure anything *that leads to anarchy and confusion*."

Here Mr. Combermere glanced at his wife,—who rose, called to the children, and, accompanied by them, gracefully withdrew.

"Now then," said Mr. Combermere, drawing his chair nearer to me,— "now, Mr. Pelham, we can discuss these matters. Women are no politicians,"—and at this sage aphorism, the Rev. Combermere laughed a low solemn laugh, which could have come from no other lips. After I had joined in this grave merriment for a second or two, I hemmed thrice, and with a countenance suited to the

subject and the host, plunged at once in *medias res*.

"Mr. St. Quintin," said I, "you are already aware, I think, of my intention of offering myself as a candidate for the borough of Buyemall. I could not think of such a measure, without calling upon you, the very first person, to solicit the honour of your vote." Mr. Combermere looked pleased, and prepared to reply. "You are the very first person I called upon," repeated I.

Mr. Combermere smiled. "Well, Mr. Pelham," said he, "our families have long been on the most intimate footing."

"Ever since," cried I, "ever since Henry the Seventh's time have the houses of St. Quintin and Glenmorris been allied! Your ancestors, you know, were settled in the county before our's, and my mother assures me that she has read, in some old book or another, a long account of your forefather's kind reception of mine at the castle of St. Quintin. I do trust, sir, that we have done nothing to forfeit a support so long afforded us."

"Mr. St. Quintin bowed in speechless gratification; at length he found

voice. "But your principles, Mr. Pelham?"

"Quite your's, my dear sir: *quite against anarchy and confusion*."

"But the Catholic question, Mr. Pelham?"

"Oh! the Catholic question," repeated I, "is a question of great importance; it won't be carried—no, Mr. St. Quintin, no, it won't be carried; how *did* you think, my dear sir, that I could, in so great a question, act against my conscience?"

I said this with warmth, and Mr. St. Quintin was either too convinced or too timid to pursue so dangerous a topic any further. I blessed my stars when he paused, and, not giving him time to think of another piece of debateable ground, continued,—“Yes, Mr. St. Quintin, I called upon you the very first person. Your rank in the county, your ancient birth, to be sure, demanded it; but *I* only considered the long, long time the St. Quintins and Pelhams had been connected.”

"Well," said the Rev. Combermere, "well, Mr. Pelham, you shall have my support; and I wish, from my very heart, all success to a young gentleman of such excellent principles."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

More voices !

* * * *

Sic. How now, my masters, have you chosen him

Cit. He has our voices, sir !—*Coriolanus.*

FROM Mr. Combermere St. Quintin's we went to a bluff, hearty, radical wine-merchant, whom I had very little probability of gaining; but my success with the clerical Armado had inspirited me, and I did not suffer myself to fear, though I could scarcely persuade myself to hope. How exceedingly impossible it is, in governing men, to lay down positive rules, even where we know the temper of the individual to be gained ! "You must be very stiff and formal with the St. Quintins," said my mother. She was right in the general admonition, and had I found them all seated in the best drawing-room, Mrs. St. Quintin in her best attire, and the children on their best behaviour, I should have been as stately as Don Quixote in a brocade dressing-gown; but finding them in such dishabille, I could not affect too great a plainness and almost coarseness of bearing, as if I had never been accustomed to anything more refined than I found there; nor might I, by any appearance of pride in myself, put them in mind of the wound *their* own pride had received. The difficulty was to blend with this familiarity a certain respect, just the same as a French ambassador might have testified towards the august person of George the Third, had he found his Majesty at dinner at one o'clock, over mutton and turnips.

In overcoming this difficulty, I congratulated myself with as much zeal and fervour as if I had performed the

most important victory; for, whether it be innocent or sanguinary, in war or at an election, there is no triumph so gratifying to the viciousness of human nature, as the conquest of our fellow beings.

But I must return to my wine-merchant, Mr. Briggs. His house was at the entrance of the town of Buyemall; it stood enclosed in a small garden, flaming with crocuses and sunflowers, and exhibiting an arbour to the right, where, in the summer evenings, the respectable owner might be seen, with his waistcoat unbuttoned, in order to give that just and rational liberty to the subordinate parts of the human commonwealth which the increase of their consequence, after the hour of dinner, naturally demands. Nor, in those moments of dignified ease, was the worthy burgher without the divine inspirations of complacent contemplation which the weed of Virginia bestoweth. There, as he smoked and puffed, and looked out upon the bright crocuses, and meditated over the dim recollections of the hesternal journal, did Mr. Briggs revolve in his mind the vast importance of the borough of Buyemall to the British empire, and the vast importance of John Briggs to the borough of Buyemall.

When I knocked at the door a prettyish maid servant opened it with a smile, and a glance which the vendor of wine might probably have taught her himself after too large potations of his own spirituous

manufactures. I was ushered into a small parlour—where sat, sipping brandy and water, a short, stout, *monosyllabic* sort of figure, corresponding in outward shape to the name of *Briggs*—even unto a very nicety.

“Mr. Pelham,” said this gentleman, who was dressed in a brown coat, white waistcoat, buff-coloured inexpressibles, with long strings, and gaiters of the same hue and substance as the breeches—“Mr. Pelham, pray be seated—excuse my rising, I’m like the bishop in the story, Mr. Pelham, too old to rise;” and Mr. Briggs grunted out a short, quick, querulous, “he—he—he,” to which, of course, I replied to the best of my cachinnatory powers.

No sooner, however, did I begin to laugh, than Mr. Briggs stopped short—eyed me with a sharp, suspicious glance—shook his head, and pushed back his chair at least four feet from the spot it had hitherto occupied. Ominous signs, thought I—I must sound this gentleman a little further, before I venture to treat him as the rest of his species.

“You have a nice situation here, Mr. Briggs,” said I.

“Ah, Mr. Pelham, and a nice vote too, which is somewhat more to your purpose, I believe.”

“Why,” said I, “Mr. Briggs, to be frank with you, I do call upon you for the purpose of requesting your vote; give it me, or not, just as you please. You may be sure I shall not make use of the vulgar electioneering arts to coax gentlemen out of their votes. I ask you for your’s as one freeman solicits another: if you think my opponent a fitter person to represent your borough, give your support to him in Heaven’s name: if not, and you place confidence in me, I will, at least, endeavour not to betray it.”

“Well done, Mr. Pelham,” ex-

claimed Mr. Briggs: “I love candour—you speak just after my own heart; but you must be aware that one does not like to be bamboozled out of one’s right of election, by a smooth-tongued fellow, who sends one to the devil the moment the election is over—or still worse, to be frightened out of it by some stiff-necked proud coxcomb, with his pedigree in his hand, and his acres in his face, thinking he does you a marvellous honour to ask you at all. Sad times these for this free country. Mr. Pelham, when a parcel of conceited paupers, like Parson Quinny (as I call that reverend fool, Mr. Combermere St. Quintin), imagine they have a right to dictate to warm, honest men, who can buy their whole family out and out. I tell you what, Mr. Pelham, we shall never do any thing for this country till we get rid of those landed aristocrats, with their ancestry and humbug. I hope you’re of my mind, Mr. Pelham.”

“Why,” answered I, “there is certainly nothing so respectable in Great Britain as our commercial interest. A man who makes himself is worth a thousand men made by their forefathers.”

“Very true, Mr. Pelham,” said the wine-merchant, advancing his chair to me; and then, laying a short, *thickset* finger upon my arm—he looked up in my face with an investigating air, and said:—“Parliamentary Reform—what do you say to that? you’re not an advocate for ancient abuses, and modern corruption, I hope, Mr. Pelham?”

“By no means,” cried I, with an honest air of indignation—“I have a conscience, Mr. Briggs, I have a conscience as a public man, no less than as a private one!”

“Admirable!” cried my host.

“No,” I continued, glowing as I proceeded, “no, Mr. Briggs; I disdain to talk too much about my principles before they are tried: the proper time

to proclaim them is when they have effected some good by being put into action. I won't supplicate your vote, Mr. Briggs, as my opponent may do; there must be a mutual confidence between my supporters and myself. When I appear before you a second time, you will have a right to see how far I have wronged that trust reposed in me as your representative. Mr. Briggs, I dare say it may seem rude and impolitic to address you in this manner; but I am a plain, blunt man, and I disdain the vulgar arts of electioneering, Mr. Briggs."

"Give us your fist, sir," cried the wine-merchant, in a transport; "give us your fist; I promise you my support, and I am delighted to vote for a

young gentleman of such excellent principles."

So much, dear reader, for Mr. Briggs, who became from that interview my staunchest supporter. I will not linger longer upon this part of my career: the above conversations may serve as a sufficient sample of my electioneering qualifications: and so I shall merely add, that after the due quantum of dining, drinking, spouting, lying, equivocating, bribing, rioting, head-breaking, promise-breaking, and—thank the god Mercury, who presides over elections—*chairing* of successful candidatureship, I found myself fairly chosen member for the borough of Buyemall!*

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Political education is like the keystone to the arch—the strength of the whole depends upon it.—*Encycl. Britt. Sup. Art. Education.*

I WAS sitting in the library of Glenmorris Castle, about a week after all the bustle of contest and the *eddit* of victory had begun to subside, and quietly *dallying* with the dry toast, which constituted then, and does to this day, my ordinary breakfast, when I was accosted by the following speech from my uncle:—

"Henry, your success has opened to you a new career: I trust you intend to pursue it?"

"Certainly," was my answer.

"But you know, my dear Henry, that though you have great talents, which, I confess, I was surprised in the course of the election to discover, yet they want that careful cultivation, which, in order to shine in the House of Commons, they must receive. *Entre nous*, Henry; a little reading 'would do you no harm."

"Very well," said I, "suppose I

begin with Walter Scott's novels; I am told they are extremely entertaining."

"True," answered my uncle, "but they don't contain the most accurate notions of history, or the soundest principles of political philosophy in the world. What did you think of doing to-day, Henry?"

* It is fortunate that Mr. Pelham's election was not for a rotten borough; so that the satire of this chapter is not yet obsolete nor unsalutary. Parliamentary Reform has not terminated the tricks of canvassing—and Mr. Pelham's descriptions are as applicable now as when first written. All personal canvassing is but for the convenience of cunning—the opportunity for manner to disguise principle. Public meetings, in which expositions of opinion must be clear and will be cross-examined, are the only legitimate mode of canvass. The English begin to discover this truth; may these scenes serve to quicken their apprehension.

—THE AUTHOR.

"*Nothing!*" said I very innocently.

"I should conceive that to be an usual answer of yours, Henry, to any similar question."

"I think it is," replied I, with great *naïveté*.

"Well, then, let us have the breakfast things taken away, and do *something* this morning."

"Willingly," said I, ringing the bell.

The table was cleared, and my uncle began his examination. Little, poor man, had he thought, from my usual bearing, and the character of my education, that in general literature there were few subjects on which I was not to the full as well read as himself. I enjoyed his surprise, when, little by little, he began to discover the extent of my information; but I was mortified to find it was *only* surprise, *not* delight.

"You have," said he, "a considerable store of learning: far more than I could possibly have imagined you possessed; but it is *knowledge*, *not* *learning*, in which I wish you to be skilled. I would rather, in order to gift you with the former, that you were more destitute of the latter. The object of education is to instil *principles* which are hereafter to guide and instruct us; *facts* are only desirable, so far as they illustrate those principles; principles ought therefore to precede facts! What then can we think of a system which reverses this evident order, overloads the memory with facts, and those of the most doubtful description, while it leaves us entirely in the dark with regard to the principles which could alone render this heterogeneous mass of any advantage or avail? Learning, without knowledge, is but a bundle of prejudices; a lumber of inert matter set before the threshold of the understanding to the exclusion of common sense. Pause for a moment, and recall those of your contemporaries who are gene-

rally considered well-informed; tell me if their information has made them a whit the *wiser*: if not, it is only sanctified ignorance. Tell me if names with them are not a sanction for opinion; quotations, the representatives of axioms! All they have learned only serves as an excuse for all they are ignorant of. In one month, I will engage that you shall have a juster and deeper insight into wisdom, than they have been all their lives acquiring; the great error of education is to fill the mind *first* with antiquated authors, and then to try the principles of the present day by the authorities and maxims of the past. We will pursue, for our plan, the exact reverse of the ordinary method. We will learn the doctrines of the day, as the first and most necessary step, and we will then glance over those which have passed away, as researches rather curious than useful.

"You see this very small pamphlet; it is a paper by Mr. Mill, upon Government. We will know this thoroughly, and when we have done so, we may rest assured that we have a far more accurate information upon the head and front of all political knowledge, than two-thirds of the young men whose cultivation of mind you have usually heard panegyrised."

So saying, my uncle opened the pamphlet. He pointed out to me its close and mathematical reasoning, in which no flaw could be detected, nor deduction controverted; and he filled up, as we proceeded, from the science of his own clear and enlarged mind, the various parts which the political logician had left for reflection to complete. My uncle had this great virtue of an *expositor*, that he never *over-explained*; he never made a parade of his lecture, nor confused what was simple by unnecessary comment.

When we broke off our first day's employment, I was quite astonished at the new light which had gleamed

upon me. I felt like Sinbad, the sailor, when, in wandering through the cavern in which he had been buried alive, he caught the first glimpse of the bright day. Naturally eager in everything I undertook, fond of application, and addicted to reflect over the various bearings of any object that once engrossed my attention, I made great advance in my new pursuit. After my uncle had brought me to be thoroughly conversant with certain and definite principles, we proceeded to illustrate them from fact. For instance, when we had finished the "Essay upon Government," we examined into the several Constitutions of England, British America, and France; the three countries which pretend the most to excellence in their government: and we were enabled to perceive and judge the defects and merits of each, because we had, *previously* to our examination, established certain rules, by which they were to be investigated and tried. Here my sceptical indifference to facts was my chief reason for readily admitting knowledge. I had no prejudices to contend with; no obscure notions gleaned from the past; no popular maxims cherished as truths. Everything was placed before me as before a wholly impartial inquirer—freed from all the decorations and delusions of sects and parties: every argument was stated with logical precision—every opinion referred to a logical test. Hence, in a very short time, I owned the justice of my uncle's assurance, as to the comparative concentration of knowledge. We went over the whole of Mill's admirable articles in the Encyclopædia, over the more popular works of Bentham, and thence we plunged into the recesses of political economy. I know not why this study has been termed uninteresting. No sooner had I entered upon its consideration, than I could scarcely tear myself from it.

Never from that moment to this have I ceased to pay it the most constant attention, not so much as a study as an amusement; but at that time my uncle's object was not to make me a profound political economist. "I wish," said he, "merely to give you an acquaintance with the principles of the science; not that you may be entitled to boast of knowledge, but that you may be enabled to avoid ignorance; not that you may discover truth, but that you may detect error. Of all sciences, political economy is contained in the fewest books, and yet is the most difficult to master; because all its higher branches require earnestness of reflection, proportioned to the scantiness of reading. Ricardo's work, together with some conversational enlargement on the several topics he treats of, will be enough for our present purpose. I wish, *then*, to show you, how inseparably allied is the great science of public policy with that of private morality. And this, Henry, is the grandest object of all. Now to our *present* study."

Well, gentle reader, (I love, by the by, as you already perceive, that old-fashioned courtesy of addressing you)—well, to finish this part of my life, which, as it treats rather of my attempts at reformation than my success in error, must begin to weary you exceedingly, I acquired, more from my uncle's conversation than the books we read, a sufficient acquaintance with the elements of knowledge, to satisfy myself, and to please my instructor. And I must say, in justification of my studies and my tutor, that I derived one benefit from them which has continued with me to this hour—viz., I obtained a clear knowledge of moral principle. Before that time, the little ability I possessed only led me into acts, which, I fear, most benevolent reader, thou hast already sufficiently condemned: my good

feelings—for I was not naturally bad—never availed me the least when present temptation came into my way. I had no guide but passion; no rule but the impulse of the moment. What else could have been the result of my education? If I was immoral, it was because I was never taught morality. Nothing, perhaps, is less innate than virtue. I own that the lessons of my uncle did not work miracles—that, living in the world, I have not separated myself from its errors and its follies: the vortex was too strong—the atmosphere too contagious; but

I have at least avoided the crimes into which my temper would most likely have driven me. I ceased to look upon the world as a game one was to play fairly, if possible—but where a little cheating was readily allowed; I no longer divorced the interests of other men from my own: if I endeavoured to blind them, it was neither by unlawful means, nor for a purely selfish end:—if—but come, Henry Pelham, thou hast praised thyself enough for the present; and, after all, thy future adventures will best tell if thou art really amended.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

— *Mihi jam non regia Roma,
Sed vacuum Tibur placet.*—HOR.

"My dear child," said my mother to me, affectionately, "you must be very much bored here. To say truth, I am so myself. Your uncle is a very good man, but he does not make his house pleasant; and I have, lately, been very much afraid that he should convert you into a mere bookworm; after all, my dear Henry, you are quite clever enough to trust to your own ability. Your great geniuses never read."

"True, my dear mother," said I, with a most unequivocal yawn, and depositing on the table Mr. Bentham on Popular Fallacies; "true, and I am quite of your opinion. Did you see in the Post of this morning, how full Cheltenham was?"

"Yes, Henry; and now you mention it, I don't think you could do better than to go there for a month or two. As for me, I must return to your father, whom I left at Lord H——'s: a place, *entre nous*, very little more amusing than this—but then one does get one's *écarté* table,

and that dear Lady Roseville, your old acquaintance, is staying there."

"Well," said I, musingly, "suppose we take our departure the beginning of next week?—our way will be the same as far as London, and the plea of attending you will be a good excuse to my uncle for proceeding no farther in these confounded books."

"*C'est une affaire finie*," replied my mother, "and I will speak to your uncle myself."

Accordingly, the necessary disclosure of our intentions was made. Lord Glenmorris received it with proper indifference, so far as my mother was concerned; but expressed much pain at my leaving him so soon. However, when he found I was not so much gratified as honoured by his wishes for my longer *séjour*, he gave up the point with a delicacy that enchanted me.

The morning of our departure arrived. Carriage at the door—band-boxes in the passage—breakfast on the table—myself in my great coat—my uncle in his great chair. "My

dear boy," said he, "I trust we shall meet again soon: you have abilities that may make you capable of effecting much good to your fellow-creatures; but you are fond of the world, and, though not averse to application, devoted to pleasure, and likely to pervert the gifts you possess. At all events, you have now learned, both as a public character and a private individual, the difference between good and evil. Make but this distinction: that whereas, in political science, the rules you have learned may be fixed and unerring, yet the application of them must vary with time and circumstance. We must bend, temporise, and frequently withdraw, doctrines which, invariable in their truth, the prejudices of the time will not invariably allow, and even relinquish a faint hope of obtaining a great good, for the certainty of obtaining a lesser; yet in the science of private morals, which relate for the main part to ourselves individually, we have no right to deviate one single iota from

the rule of our conduct. Neither time nor circumstance must cause us to modify or to change. Integrity knows no variation; honesty no shadow of turning. We must pursue the same course—stern and uncompromising—in the full persuasion that the path of right is like the bridge from earth to heaven, in the Mahometan creed:—if we swerve but a single hair's breadth, we are irrevocably lost."

At this moment my mother joined us, with a "Well, my dear Henry, everything is ready—we have no time to lose."

My uncle rose, pressed my hand, and left in it a pocket-book, which I afterwards discovered to be most satisfactorily furnished. We took an edifying and affectionate farewell of each other, passed through the two rows of servants, drawn up in martial array, along the great hall, and I entered the carriage, and *went off* with the rapidity of a novel upon "fashionable life."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Dic—si grave non est—

Quæ prima iratum ventrem placaverit esca.—HOR.

I DID not remain above a day or two in town. I had never seen much of the humours of a watering-place, and my love of observing character made me exceedingly impatient for that pleasure. Accordingly, the first bright morning, I set off for Cheltenham. I was greatly struck with the entrance to that town: it is to these watering-places that a foreigner should be taken, in order to give him an adequate idea of the magnificent opulence and universal luxury of England. Our country has, in every province, what France only has in Paris—a capital, conse-

crated to gaiety, idleness, and enjoyment. London is both too busy in one class of society, and too pompous in another, to please a foreigner, who has not excellent recommendations to private circles. But at Brighton, Cheltenham, Hastings, Bath, he may, as at Paris, find all the gaieties of society without knowing a single individual.

My carriage stopped at the — Hotel. A corpulent and stately waiter, with gold buckles to a pair of very tight pantaloons, showed me up stairs. I found myself in a tolerable room facing the street, and garnished with

two pictures of rocks and rivers, with a comely flight of crows, hovering in the horizon of both, as natural as possible—only they were a little larger than the trees. Over the chimney-piece, where I had fondly hoped to find a looking-glass, was a grave print of General Washington, with one hand stuck out like the spout of a tea-pot. Between the two windows (unfavourable position!) was an oblong mirror, to which I immediately hastened, and had the pleasure of seeing my complexion catch the colour of the curtains that overhung the glass on each side, and exhibit the pleasing *rurality* of a pale green.

I shrunk back aghast, turned, and beheld the waiter. Had I seen myself in a glass delicately shaded by rose-hued curtains, I should gently and smilingly have said, "Have the goodness to bring me the bill of fare." As it was, I growled out, "Bring me the bill."

The stiff waiter bowed solemnly, and withdrew slowly. I looked round the room once more, and discovered the additional adornments of a tea-urn, and a book. "Thank Heaven," thought I, as I took up the latter, "it can't be one of Jeremy Bentham's." No! it was the Cheltenham Guide. I turned to the head of amusements—"Dress ball at the rooms every —" some day or other—which of the seven I utterly forget; but it was the same as that which witnessed my first arrival in the small drawing-room of the — Hotel.

"Thank Heaven!" said I to myself, as Bedos entered with my things, and was ordered immediately to have all in preparation for "the dress-ball at the rooms," at the hour of half-past ten. The waiter entered with the bill. "Soups, chops, cutlets, steaks, roast joints, &c.—*lion, birds.*"

"Get some soup," said I, "a slice or two of lion, and half a dozen birds."

"Sir" said the solemn waiter, "you

can't have less than a whole lion, and we have only two birds in the house."

"Pray," asked I, "are you in the habit of supplying your larder from Exeter 'Change, or do you breed lions here like poultry?"

"Sir," answered the grim waiter, never relaxing into a smile, "we have lions brought us from the country every day."

"What do you pay for them?" said I.

"About three and sixpence a-piece, sir."

"Humph! market in Africa overstocked," thought I.

"Pray, how do you dress an animal of that description?"

"Roast and stuff him, sir, and serve him up with currant jelly."

"What! like a hare!"

"A lion is a hare, sir."

"What!"

"Yes, sir, it is a hare!—but we call it a lion, because of the Game Laws."

"Bright discovery," thought I; "they have a new language in Cheltenham; nothing's like travelling to enlarge the mind." "And the birds," said I, aloud, "are neither humming-birds, nor ostriches, I suppose!"

"No, sir; they are partridges."

"Well, then, give me some soup, a cutlet, and a 'bird,' as you term it, and be quick about it."

"It shall be done with despatch," answered the pompous attendant, and withdrew.

Is there, in the whole course of this pleasant and varying life, which young gentlemen and ladies write verses to prove same and sorrowful,—is there in the whole course of it, one half-hour really and genuinely disagreeable!—if so, it is the half hour before dinner at a strange inn. Nevertheless, by the help of philosophy and the window, I managed to endure it with great patience: and, though I was furnishing with hunger, I pretended the indifference of a sage, even when the dinner

was at length announced. I coquetted a whole minute with my napkin, before I attempted the soup, and I helped myself to the potatory food with a slow dignity that must have perfectly won the heart of the solemn waiter. The soup was a little better than hot water, and the sharp-sauced cutlet than leather and vinegar; howbeit, I attacked them with the vigour of an Irishman, and washed them down with a bottle of the worst liquor ever dignified with the *venerabile nomen* of claret. The bird was tough enough to have passed for an ostrich in miniature; and I felt its ghost hopping about the stomachic sepulchre to which I consigned it, the whole of that evening, and a great portion of the next day, when a glass of curaçoa laid it at rest.

After this splendid repast, I flung myself back on my chair with the complacency of a man who has dined well,

and dozed away the time till the hour of dressing.

"Now," thought I, as I placed myself before my glass, "shall I gently please, or sublimely astonish the 'fashionables' of Cheltenham?—Ah, bah! the latter school is vulgar, Byron spoilt it. Don't put out that chain, Bedos—I wear—the black coat, waistcoat, and trowsers. Brush my hair as much *out* of curl as you can, and give an air of graceful negligence to my *tout ensemble*."

"*Oui, Monsieur, je comprends,*" answered Bedos.

I was soon dressed, for it is the *design*, not the *execution*, of all great undertakings which requires deliberation and delay. *Action* cannot be too prompt. A chair was called, and Henry Pelham was conveyed to the rooms

CHAPTER XL.

Now see, prepared to lead the sprightly dance,
The lovely nymphs, and well-dress'd youths advance;
The spacious room receives its jovial guest,
And the floor shakes with pleasing weight oppress'd.—*Art of Dancing.*

Page. His name, my lord, is Tyrrell.—*Richard III.*

UPON entering, I saw several heads rising and sinking, to the tune of "Cherry ripe." A whole row of stiff necks, in cravats of the most unexceptionable length and breadth, were set before me. A tall thin young man, with dark wiry hair brushed on one side, was drawing on a pair of white Woodstock gloves, and affecting to look round the room with the supreme indifference of *bon ton*.

"Ah, Ritson," said another young Cheltenhamian to him of the Woodstock gauntlets, "hav'n't you been dancing yet?"

"No, Smith, 'pon honour!" answered Mr. Ritson; "it is so overpoweringly hot; no fashionable man dances now;—*it isn't the thing*."

"Why," replied Mr. Smith, who was a good-natured looking person, with a blue coat and brass buttons, and a gold pin in his necke'cth, "why, they dance at Almack's, don't they?"

"No, 'pon honour," murmured Mr. Ritson; "no, they just walk a quadrille or *spin a valtz*, as my friend, Lord Bobadob, calls it; nothing more—no, hang dancing, 'tis so vulgar."

A stout, red-faced man, about thirty,

with wet auburn hair, a marvellously fine waistcoat, and a badly washed frill, now joined Messrs. Ritson and Smith.

"Ah, Sir Ralph," cried Smith, "how d'ye do? been hunting all day, I suppose?"

"Yes, old cock," replied Sir Ralph; "been after the brush till I am quite done up; such a glorious run! By G—, you should have seen my grey mare, Smith; by G—, she's a glorious fencer."

"You don't hunt, do you, Ritson?" interrogated Mr. Smith.

"Yes, I do," replied Mr. Ritson, affectedly playing with his Woodstock glove; "yes, but I only hunt in Leicestershire with my friend, Lord Bobadob; 'tis not the thing to hunt anywhere else."

Sir Ralph stared at the speaker with mute contempt: while Mr. Smith, like the ass between the hay, stood balancing betwixt the opposing merits of the baronet and the beau. Meanwhile, a smiling, nodding, affected female thing, in ringlets and flowers, flirted up to the trio.

"Now, reelly, Mr. Smith, you should deence; a feeshionable young man, like you—I don't know what the young leedies will say to you." And the fair seducer laughed bewitchingly.

"You are very good, Mrs. Dollimore," replied Mr. Smith, with a blush and a low bow; "but Mr. Ritson tells me it is not *the thing* to dance."

"Oh," cried Mrs. Dollimore, "but then he's seech a naughty, conceited creature—don't follow his example, Meester Smith;" and again the good lady laughed immoderately.

"Nay, Mrs. Dollimore," said Mr. Ritson, passing his hand through his abominable hair, "you are too severe; but tell me, Mrs. Dollimore, is the Countess —— coming here?"

"Now, reelly, Mr. Ritson, *you*, who are the pink of feeshion, ought

to know better than I can; but I hear so."

"Do you know the countess?" said Mr. Smith, in respectful surprise, to Ritson.

"Oh, very well," replied the Coryphæus of Cheltenham, swinging his Woodstock glove to and fro; "I have often *danced* with her at Almack's."

"Is she a good deencer?" asked Mrs. Dollimore.

"O, capital," responded Mr. Ritson: "she's such a nice genteel little figure."

Sir Ralph, apparently tired of this "feeshionable" conversation, swagged away.

"Pray," said Mrs. Dollimore, "who is that gentleman?"

"Sir Ralph Rumford," replied Smith, eagerly, "a particular friend of mine at Cambridge."

"I wonder if he's going to make a long steey?" said Mrs. Dollimore.

"Yes, I believe so," replied Mr. Smith, "if we make it agreeable to him."

"You must positively introduce him to me," said Mrs. Dollimore.

"I will, with great pleasure," said the good-natured Mr. Smith.

"Is Sir Ralph a *man of fashion*?" inquired Mr. Ritson.

"He's a baronet!" emphatically pronounced Mr. Smith.

"Ah!" replied Ritson, "but he may be a man of rank, without being a man of fashion."

"True," lisped Mrs. Dollimore.

"I don't know," replied Smith, with an air of puzzled wonderment, "but he has 7,000*l.* a-year."

"Has he, indeed?" cried Mrs. Dollimore, surprised at her natural tone of voice; and, at that moment, a young lady, ringletted and flowered like herself, joined her, and accosted her by the endearing appellation of "Mamma."

"Have you been dancing, *my* love?" inquired Mrs. Dollimore.

"Yes, ma; with Captain Johnson."

"Oh," said the mother, with a toss of her head; and, giving her daughter a significant push, she walked away with her to another end of the room, to talk about Sir Ralph Rumford, and his seven thousand pounds a-year.

"Well!" thought I, "odd people these; let us enter a little farther into this savage country." In accordance with this reflection, I proceeded towards the middle of the room.

"Who's that?" said Mr. Smith, in a loud whisper as I passed him.

"Pon honour," answered Ritson, "I don't know! but he's a deuced neat-looking fellow."

"Thank you, Mr. Ritson," said my vanity; "you are not so offensive after all."

I paused to look at the dancers; a middle-aged, respectable-looking gentleman was beside me. Common people, after they have passed forty, grow social. My neighbour hemmed twice, and made preparation for speaking. "I may as well encourage him," was my reflection; accordingly I turned round, with a most good-natured expression of countenance.

"A fine room this, sir," said the man immediately.

"Very," said I, with a smile, "and extremely well filled."

"Ah sir," answered my neighbour, "Cheltenham is not as it used to be some fifteen years ago. I have seen as many as one thousand two hundred and fifty persons within these walls" (certain people are always so d——d particularising); "ay, sir," pursued my *laudator temporis acti*, "and half the peerage here into the bargain."

"Indeed!" quoth I, with an air of surprise suited to the information I received, "but the society is very good still, is it not?"

"Oh, very *gent-el*," replied the man; "but not so *dashing* as it used to be." (Oh! those two horrid words!

low enough to suit even the author of "——.")

"Pray," asked I, glancing at Messrs. Ritson and Smith, "do you know who those gentlemen are?"

"Extremely well!" replied my neighbour; "the tall young man is Mr. Ritson; his mother has a house in Baker-street, and gives quite *elegant* parties. He's a most *genteel* young man; but such an insufferable coxcomb."

"And the other?" said I.

"Oh! he's a Mr. Smith; his father was an eminent brewer, and is lately dead, leaving each of his sons thirty thousand pounds; the young Smith is a *knowing hand*, and wants to spend his money with spirit. He has a great passion for '*high life*,' and therefore attaches himself much to Mr. Ritson, who is *quite that way inclined*."

"He could not have selected a better model," said I.

"True," rejoined my Cheltenham Asmodeus, with *naïve* simplicity; "but I hope he won't adopt his *conceit* as well as his *elegance*."

"I shall die," said I to myself, "if I talk with this fellow any longer," and I was just going to glide away, when a tall, stately dowager, with two lean, scraggy daughters, entered the room; I could not resist pausing to inquire who they were.

My friend looked at me with a very altered and disrespectful air at this interrogation. "Who?" said he, "why the Countess of Babbleton and her two daughters, the Honourable Lady Jane Babel, and the Honourable Lady Mary Babel. They are the great people of Cheltenham," pursued he, "and it's a *fine thing* to get into their set."

Meanwhile Lady Babbleton and her two daughters swept up the room, bowing and nodding to the riven ranks on each side, who made their salutations with the most profound

respect. My experienced eye detected in a moment that Lady Babbleton, in spite of her title and her stateliness, was exceedingly the reverse of good *ton*, and the daughters (who did not resemble the scrag of mutton, *but its ghost*) had an appearance of sour affability, which was as different from the manners of proper society as it possibly could be.

I wondered greatly who and what they were. In the eyes of the Cheltenhamians, they were *the* countess and her daughters; and any further explanation would have been deemed quite superfluous; further explanation I was, however, determined to procure, and was walking across the room in profound meditation as to the method in which the discovery should be made, when I was startled by the voice of Sir Lionel Garrett: I turned round, and to my inexpressible joy, beheld that worthy baronet.

"Bless me, Pelham," said he, "how delighted I am to see you. Lady Harriet, here's your old favourite, Mr. Pelham."

Lady Harriet was all smiles and pleasure. "Give me your arm," said she; "I must go and speak to Lady Babbleton—odious woman!"

"Do, my dear Lady Harriet," said I, "explain to me *what* Lady Babbleton was."

"Why—she was a milliner, and took in the late lord, who was an idiot.—*Voilà tout!*"

"Perfectly satisfactory," replied I.

"Or, short and sweet, as Lady Babbleton would say," replied Lady Harriet, laughing.

"In antithesis to her daughters, who are long and sour."

"Oh, you satirist!" said the affected Lady Harriet (who was only three removes better than the Cheltenham countess); "but tell me, how long have you been at Cheltenham?"

"About four hours and a half!"

"Then you don't know any of the lions here?"

"None, except (I added to myself) the lion I had for dinner."

"Well, let me despatch Lady Babbleton, and I'll then devote myself to being your nomenclator."

We walked up to Lady Babbleton, who had already disposed of her daughters, and was sitting in solitary dignity at the end of the room.

"My dear Lady Babbleton," cried Lady Harriet, taking both the hands of the dowager, "I am so glad to see you, and how well you are looking; and your charming daughters, how are they?—sweet girls!—and how long have you been here?"

"We have only just come," replied the *ci-devant* milliner, half rising, and rustling her plumes in stately agitation, like a nervous parrot; "we must conform to modern *ours*, Lady *Arriett*, though, for my part, I like the old fashioned plan of dining early, and finishing one's gaieties before midnight; but I set the fashion of good *ours* as well as I can. I think it's a duty *we* owe to society, Lady *Arriett*, to encourage morality by our own example. What else do we have rank for?" And, so saying, the counter-countess drew herself up with a most edifying air of moral dignity.

Lady Harriet looked at me, and perceiving that my eye said "go on," as plainly as eye could possibly speak, she continued—"Which of the wells do you attend, Lady Babbleton?"

"All," replied the patronising dowager. "I like to encourage the poor people here; I've no notion of being proud because one has a title, Lady *Arriett*."

"No," rejoined the worthy helpmate of Sir Lionel Garrett; "every body talks of your condescension, Lady Babbleton; but are you not afraid of letting yourself down by going everywhere?"

"Oh," answered *the countess*,

admit very few into my set *at home*, but I *go out promiscuously*;" and then, looking at me, she said, in a whisper, to Lady Harriet, "who is that nice young gentleman?"

"Mr. Pelham," replied Lady Harriet; and, turning to me, formally introduced us to each other.

"Are you any relation (asked the dowager) to Lady Frances Pelham?"

"Only her son," said I.

"Dear lad," replied Lady Babbleton, "how odd; what a nice *delegant* woman she is! She does not go much out, does she? I don't often meet her."

"I should not think it likely that your ladyship did meet her much. She does not visit *promiscuously*."

"Every rank has its duty," said Lady Harriet, gravely; "your mother, Mr. Pelham, may confine her circle as much as she pleases; but the high rank of Lady Babbleton requires greater condescension; just as the Dukes of Sussex and Gloucester go to many places where you and I would not."

"Very true!" said the innocent dowager; "and that's a very sensible remark! Were you at Bath last winter, Mr. Pelham?" continued the countess, whose thoughts wandered from subject to subject in the most *rudderless* manner.

"No, Lady Babbleton, I was unfortunately at a less distinguished place."

"What was that?"

"Paris!"

"Oh, indeed! I've never been abroad; I don't think persons of a certain rank should leave England; they should stay at home and encourage their own manufactories."

"Ah!" cried I, taking hold of Lady Babbleton's shawl, "what a pretty Manchester pattern this is."

"Manchester pattern!" exclaimed the petrified peeress; "why it is real cachemire: you don't think I wear any thing English, Mr. Pelham?"

"I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons. I am no judge of dress; but to return—I am quite of your opinion, *that we ought to encourage our own manufactories*, and not go abroad: but one cannot stay long on the Continent, even if one is decoyed there. One soon longs for home again."

"Very sensibly remarked," rejoined Lady Babbleton: "that's what I call true patriotism and morality. I wish all the young men of the present day were like you. Oh, dear!—here's a great favourite of mine coming this way—Mr. Ritson!—do you know him; shall I introduce you?"

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed I—frightened out of my wits, and my manners. "Come, Lady Harriet, let us rejoin Sir Lionel;" and, 'swift at the word,' Lady Harriet retook my arm, nodded her adieu to Lady Babbleton, and withdrew with me to an obscurer part of the room.

Here we gave way to our laughter for some time—"Is it possible," exclaimed I, starting up—"Can that be Tyrrell?"

"What's the matter with the man?" cried Lady Harriet.

I quickly recovered my presence of mind, and resealed myself: "Pray forgive me, Lady Harriet," said I, "but I think, nay, I am sure, I see a person I once met under very particular circumstances. Do you observe that dark man in deep mourning, who has just entered the room, and is now speaking to Sir Ralph Rumford?"

"I do, it is Sir John Tyrrell!" replied Lady Harriet: "he only came to Cheltenham yesterday. His is a very singular history."

"What is it?" said I, eagerly.

"Why! he was the only son of a younger branch of the Tyrrells; a very old family, as the name denotes. He was a great deal in a certain *roué* set, for some years, and was celebrated

for his gallantries. His fortune was, however, perfectly unable to satisfy his expenses; he took to gambling, and lost the remains of his property. He went abroad, and used to be seen at the low gaming houses at Paris, earning a very degraded and precarious subsistence; till, about three months ago, two persons, who stood between him and the title and estates of the family, died, and most unexpectedly he succeeded to both. They say that he was found in the most utter penury and distress, in a small cellar at Paris; however that may be, he is now Sir John Tyrrell, with a very large income, and, in spite of a certain coarseness of manner, probably acquired by the low company he latterly kept, he is very much liked, and even admired, by the few good people in the society of Cheltenham."

At this instant Tyrrell passed us; he caught my eye, stopped short, and

coloured violently. I bowed; he seemed undecided for a moment as to the course he should adopt; it was *but* for a moment. He returned my salutation with great appearance of cordiality; shook me warmly by the hand; expressed himself delighted to meet me; inquired where I was staying, and said he should certainly call upon me. With this promise he glided on, and was soon lost among the crowd.

"Where did you meet him?" said Lady Harriet.

"At Paris."

"What! was he in decent society there?"

"I don't know," said I. "Good night, Lady Harriet;" and, with an air of extreme lassitude, I took my hat, and vanished from that motley mixture of the *fashionably low* and the vulgarly *genteel*!

CHAPTER XLI.

— Full many a lady

I have eyed with best regard, and many a time
The harmony of their tongues bath unto bondage
Drawn my too diligent ears.

But you, oh! you,

So perfect and so peerless, are create
Of every creature's best.—SHAKESPEARE

Thou wilt easily conceive, my dear reader, who hast been in my confidence throughout the whole of this history, and whom, though as yet thou hast cause to esteem me but lightly, I already love as my familiar and my friend—thou wilt easily conceive my surprise at meeting so unexpectedly with my old hero of the gambling-house. I felt indeed perfectly stunned at the shock of so singular a change in his circumstances since I had last met him. My thoughts

reverted immediately to that scene, and to the mysterious connection between Tyrrell and Glanville. How would the latter receive the intelligence of his enemy's good fortune; was his vengeance yet satisfied, or through what means could it now find vent?

A thousand thoughts similar to these occupied and distracted my attention till morning, when I summoned Bedos into the room to read me to sleep. He opened a play of

Monsieur Delavigne's, and at the beginning of the second scene I was in the land of dreams.

I woke about two o'clock; dressed, sipped my chocolate, and was on the point of arranging my hat to the best advantage, when I received the following note:—

"MY DEAR PELHAM,

"*Me tibi commendo.*" I heard this morning, at your hotel, that you were here; my heart was a house of joy at the intelligence. I called upon you two hours ago; but, like Antony, 'you revel long o' nights.' Ah, that I could add with Shakspeare, that you were 'notwithstanding up.' I have just come from Paris, that *umbilicus terre*, and my adventures since I saw you, for your private satisfaction, 'because I love you I will let you know;' but you must satisfy me with a meeting. Till you do, 'the mighty gods defend you!'

"VINCENT."

The hotel from which Vincent dated this epistle, was in the same street as my own caravanserai, and to this hotel I immediately set off. I found my friend sitting before a huge folio, which he in vain endeavoured to persuade me that he seriously intended to read. We greeted each other with the greatest cordiality.

"But how," said Vincent, after the first warmth of welcome had subsided, "how shall I congratulate you upon your new honours? I was not prepared to find you grown from a *roué* into a senator.

'In gathering votes you were not slack,
Now stand as tightly by your tack,
Ne'er show your lug an' fidge your back,
An' hum an' haw;
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
Before them a'.'

So saith Burns; advice which, being interpreted, meaneth, that you must astonish the rats of St. Stephen's."

"Alas!" said I, "all one's clap-traps in that house must be baited."

"Nay, but a rat bites at any cheese, from Gloucester to Parmesan, and you can easily scrape up a bit of some sort. Talking of the House, do you see, by the paper, that the civic senator, Alderman W——, is at Cheltenham?"

"I was not aware of it. I suppose he's cramming speeches and turtle for the next season."

"How wonderfully," said Vincent, "your city dignities unloose the tongue: directly a man has been a mayor, he thinks himself qualified for a Tully at least. Faith, the Lord Mayor asked me one day, what was the Latin for spouting? and I told him, '*hippomanes*, or a raging humour in *mayors*.'"

After I had paid, through the medium of my risible muscles, due homage to this witticism of Vincent's, he shut up his folio, called for his hat, and we sauntered down into the street.

"When do you go up to town?" asked Vincent.

"Not till my senatorial duties require me."

"Do you stay here till then?"

"As it pleases the gods. But, good heavens! Vincent, what a beautiful girl!"

Vincent turned. "*O Dea certè*," murmured he, and stopped.

The object of our exclamations was standing by a corner shop, apparently waiting for some one within. Her face, at the moment I first saw her, was turned full towards me. Never had I seen any countenance half so lovely. She was apparently about twenty; her hair was of the richest chestnut, and a golden light played through its darkness, as if a sunbeam had been caught in those luxuriant tresses, and was striving in vain to escape. Her eyes were of light hazel, large, deep, and *shaded into softness*

(to use a modern expression) by long and very dark lashes. Her complexion alone would have rendered her beautiful, it was so clear—so pure; the blood blushed beneath it, like roses under a clear stream; if, in order to justify my simile, roses would have the complacency to grow in such a situation. Her nose was of that fine and accurate mould that one so seldom sees, except in the Grecian statues, which unites the clearest and most decided outline with the most feminine delicacy and softness; and the short curved arch which descended from thence to her mouth, was so fine—so *airily* and exquisitely formed, that it seemed as if Love himself had modelled the bridge which led to his most beautiful and fragrant island. On the right side of the mouth was one dimple, which corresponded so exactly with every smile and movement of those rosy lips, that you might have sworn the shadow of each passed there; it was like the rapid changes of an April heaven reflected upon a valley. She was somewhat, but not much, taller than the ordinary height; and her figure, which united all the first freshness and youth of the girl with the more luxuriant graces of the woman, was rounded and finished so justly, that the eye could glance over the whole, without discovering the least harshness or unevenness, or atom to be added or subtracted. But over all these was a light, a glow, a pervading spirit, of which it is impossible to convey the faintest idea. You

should have seen her by the side of a shaded fountain on a summer's day. You should have watched her amidst music and flowers, and she might have seemed to you like the fairy that presided over both. So much for poetical description—it is not my *forte*!

“What think you of her, Vincent?” said I.

“I say, with Theocritus, in his epithalamium of Helen——”

“Say no such thing,” said I; “I will not have her presence profaned by any helps from your memory.”

At that moment the girl turned round abruptly, and re-entered the stationer's shop, at the door of which she had been standing.

“Let us enter,” said Vincent: “I want some sealing-wax.”

I desired no second invitation: we marched into the shop. My Armida was leaning on the arm of an old lady. She blushed deeply when she saw us enter; and, as ill-luck would have it, the old lady concluded her purchases the moment after, and they withdrew.

“Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparallel'd!”

justly observed my companion.

I made no reply. All the remainder of that day I was absent and reserved; and Vincent, perceiving that I no longer laughed at his jokes, nor smiled at his quotations, told me I was sadly changed for the worse, and pretended an engagement, to rid himself of an auditor so obtuse

CHAPTER XLII.

Tout notre mal vient de ne pouvoir être seuls ; de là le jeu, le luxe, la dissipation, le vin, les femmes, l'ignorance, la médisance, l'envie, l'oubli de soi-même et de Dieu.

LA BRUYERE.

THE next day I resolved to call upon Tyrrell, seeing that he had not yet kept his promise of anticipating me, and being very desirous not to lose any opportunity of improving my acquaintance with him ; accordingly, I sent my valet to make inquiries as to his abode. I found that he lodged in the same hotel as myself ; and having previously ascertained that he was at home, I was ushered by the head waiter into the gamester's apartment.

He was sitting by the fire in a listless, yet thoughtful attitude. His muscular and rather handsome person was indued in a dressing-gown of rich brocade, thrown on with a slovenly *nonchalance*. His stockings were about his heels, his hair was dishevelled, and the light, streaming through the half-drawn window-curtains, rested upon the grey flakes with which its darker luxuriance was interspersed ; and the cross light in which he had the imprudence or misfortune to sit, fully developed the deep wrinkles which years and dissipation had planted round his eyes and mouth. I was quite startled at the *oldness* and haggardness of his appearance.

He rose gracefully enough when I was announced ; and no sooner had the waiter retired, than he came up to me, shook me warmly by the hand, and said, "Let me thank you *now* for the attention you formerly showed me, when I was less able to express my acknowledgments. I shall be proud to cultivate your intimacy."

I answered him in the same strain, and, in the course of conversation, made myself so entertaining, that he agreed to spend the remainder of the day with me. We ordered our horses at three, and our dinner at seven, and I left him till the former were ready, in order to allow him time for his toilet.

During our ride we talked principally on general subjects, on the various differences of France and England, on horses, on wines, on women, on politics, on all things, except that which had created our acquaintance. His remarks were those of a strong, ill-regulated mind, which had made experience supply the place of the reasoning faculties ; there was a looseness in his sentiments, and a licentiousness in his opinions, which startled even me (used as I had been to rakes of all schools) ; his philosophy was of that species which thinks that the best maxim of wisdom is—to despise. Of men he spoke with the bitterness of hatred ; of women, with the levity of contempt. France had taught him its debaucheries, but not the elegance which refines them : if his sentiments were low, the language in which they were clothed was meaner still : and that which makes the morality of the upper classes, and which no criminal is supposed to be hardy enough to reject ; that religion which has no scoffers, that code which has no impugnors, *that honour* among gentlemen, which constitutes the moving principle of the society in which they live, he seemed to imagine, even in

its most fundamental laws, was an authority to which nothing but the inexperience of the young, and the credulity of the romantic, could accede.

Upon the whole, he seemed to me a "bold, bad man," with just enough of intellect to teach him to be a villain, without that higher degree which shows him that it is the worst course for his interest; and just enough of daring to make him indifferent to the dangers of guilt, though it was not sufficient to make him conquer and control them. For the rest, he loved trotting better than cantering—piqued himself upon being manly—wore doe-skin gloves—drank port wine, *par préférence*, and considered beef-steaks and oyster-sauce as the most delicate dish in the bill of fare. I think, now, reader, you have a tolerably good view of his character.

After dinner, when we were discuss-

ing the second bottle, I thought it would not be a bad opportunity to question him upon his acquaintance with Glanville. His countenance fell directly I mentioned that name. However, he rallied himself. "Oh," said he, "you mean the *soi-disant* Warburton. I knew him some years back—he was a poor silly youth, half mad, I believe, and particularly hostile to me, owing to some foolish disagreement when he was quite a boy."

"What was the cause?" said I.

"Nothing—nothing of any consequence," answered Tyrrell; and then added, with an air of coxcombry, "I believe I was more fortunate than he, in a certain intrigue. Poor Glanville is a little romantic, you know. But enough of this now: shall we go to the rooms?"

"With pleasure," said I; and to the rooms we went.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Veteres revocavit artes.—HOR.

Since I came hither I have heard strange news.—King Lear.

Two days after my long conversation with Tyrrell, I called again upon that worthy. To my great surprise he had left Cheltenham. I then strolled to Vincent: I found him lolling on his sofa, surrounded, as usual, with books and papers.

"Come in, Pelham," said he, as I hesitated at the threshold—"come in. I have been delighting myself with Plato all the morning; I scarcely know what it is that enchants us so much with the ancients. I rather believe, with Schlegel, that it is that air of perfect repose—the stillness of a deep soul, which rests over their

writings. Whatever would appear commonplace amongst us, has with them I know not what of sublimity and pathos. Triteness seems the profundity of truth—wildness, the daring of a luxuriant imagination. The fact is, that in spite of every fault, you see, through all, the traces of original thought; there is a contemplative grandeur in their sentiments, which seems to have nothing borrowed in its meaning or its dress. Take, for instance, this fragment of Minnermus, on the shortness of life,—what subject can seem more tame!—what less striking than the feelings

he expresses?—and yet, throughout every line, there is a melancholy depth and tenderness, which it is impossible to define. Of all English writers who partake the most of this spirit of conveying interest and strength to sentiments and subjects neither novel in themselves, nor adorned in their arrangement, I know none that equal Byron: it is indeed the chief beauty of that extraordinary poet. Examine *Childe Harold* accurately, and you will be surprised to discover how very little of real depth or novelty there often is in the reflections which seem most deep and new. You are enchained by the vague but powerful beauty of the style; the strong impress of originality which breathes throughout. Like the oracle of Dodona, he makes the forests his tablets, and writes his inspirations upon the leaves of the trees; but the source of that inspiration you cannot tell; it is neither the truth nor the beauty of his sayings which you admire, though you fancy that it is: it is the mystery which accompanies them."

"Pray," said I, "do you not imagine that one great cause of this spirit of which you speak, and which seems to be nothing more than a thoughtful method of expressing all things, even to trifles, was the great loneliness to which the ancient poets and philosophers were attached? I think (though I have not your talent for quoting) that Cicero calls 'the consideration of nature the food of the mind,' and the mind which, in solitude, is confined necessarily to a few objects, meditates more closely upon those it embraces: the habit of this meditation enters and pervades the system, and whatever afterwards emanates from it is tinged with the thoughtful and contemplative colours it has received."

"Wonderful!" cried Vincent: "how long have you learnt to read Cicero, and talk about the mind?"

"Ah," said I, "I am perhaps less ignorant than I affect to be: it is *now* my object to be a dandy; hereafter I may aspire to be an orator—a wit, a scholar, or a Vincent. You will see then that there have been many odd quarters of an hour in my life less unprofitably wasted than you imagine."

Vincent rose in a sort of nervous excitement, and then reseating himself, fixed his dark bright eyes steadfastly upon me for some moments; his countenance all the while assuming a higher and graver expression than I had ever before seen it wear.

"Pelham," said he, at last, "it is for the sake of moments like these, when your better nature flashes out, that I have sought your society and your friendship. I, too, am not wholly what I appear: the world may yet see that Halifax was not the only statesman whom the pursuits of literature had only formed the better for the labours of business. Meanwhile, let me pass for the pedant, and the bookworm: like a sturdier adventurer than myself, 'I bide my time.'—Pelham—this will be a busy session! shall you prepare for it?"

"Nay," answered I, relapsing into my usual tone of languid affectation; "I shall have too much to do in attending to Stultz, and Nugee, and Tattersall and Baxter, and a hundred other occupiers of spare time. Remember, this is my first season in London since my majority."

Vincent took up the newspaper with evident chagrin; however, he was too theoretically the man of the world, long to show his displeasure. "Parr—Parr—again," said he; "how they stuff the journals with that name. Heaven knows, I venerate learning as much as any man; but I respect it for its uses, and not for itself. However, I will not quarrel with his reputation—it is but for a day. Literary men who leave nothing but their

name to posterity, have but a short twilight of posthumous renown. *Appropos*, do you know my pun upon Parr and the Major?"

"Not I," said I, "*Majora canamus!*"

"Why, Parr and I, and two or three more, were dining once at poor T. M——'s, the author of 'The Indian Antiquities.' Major ——, a great traveller, entered into a dispute with Parr about Babylon; the Doctor got into a violent passion, and poured out such a heap of quotations on his unfortunate antagonist, that the latter, stunned by the clamour, and terrified by the Greek, was obliged to succumb. Parr turned triumphantly to me: 'What is your opinion, my lord,' said he; 'who is in the right!'"

"*Adversis* MAJOR—PAR *secundis*," answered I.

"Vincent," I said, after I had expressed sufficient admiration at his pun—"Vincent, I begin to be weary of this life; I shall accordingly pack up my books and myself, and go to Malvern Wells, to live quietly till I think it time for London. After to-day you will, therefore, see me no more."

"I cannot," answered Vincent, "contravene so laudable a purpose, however I may be the loser." And, after a short and desultory conversation, I left him once more to the tranquil enjoyment of his Plato. That evening I went to Malvern, and there I remained in a monotonous state of existence, dividing my time equally between my mind and my body, and forming myself into that state of contemplative reflection, which was the object of Vincent's admiration in the writings of the ancients.

Just when I was on the point of leaving my retreat, I received an intelligence which most materially affected my future prospects. My uncle, who had arrived at the sober age of fifty, without any apparent designs of matrimony, fell suddenly

in love with a lady in his immediate neighbourhood, and married her, after a courtship of three weeks.

"I should not," said my poor mother, very generously, in a subsequent letter, "so much have minded his marriage, if the lady had not thought proper to become in the family way; a thing which I do and always shall consider a most unwarrantable encroachment on your rights."

I will confess that, on first hearing this news, I experienced a bitter pang; but I reasoned it away. I was already under great obligations to my uncle, and I felt it a very unjust and ungracious assumption on my part, to affect anger at conduct I had no right to question, or mortification at the loss of pretensions I had so equivocal a privilege to form. A man of fifty has, *perhaps*, a right to consult his own happiness, almost as much as a man of thirty; and if he attracts by his choice the ridicule of those whom he has never obliged, it is at least from those persons he *has* obliged, that he is to look for countenance and defence.

Fraught with these ideas, I wrote to my uncle a sincere and warm letter of congratulation. His answer was, like himself, kind, affectionate, and generous; it informed me that he had already made over to me the annual sum of one thousand pounds; and that in case of his having a lineal heir, he had, moreover, settled upon me, after his death, two thousand a-year. He ended by assuring me that his only regret at marrying a lady who, in *all* respects was, above *all* women, calculated to make him happy, was his unfeigned reluctance to deprive me of a station, which (he was pleased to say) I not only deserved, but should adorn.

Upon receiving this letter, I was sensibly affected with my uncle's kindness; and so far from repining at his choice, I most heartily wished

him every blessing it could afford him, even though an heir to the titles of Glenmorris were one of them.

I protracted my stay at Malvern some weeks longer than I had intended: the circumstance which had wrought so great a change in my fortune, wrought no less powerfully on my character. I became more thoughtfully and solidly ambitious. Instead of wasting my time in idle regrets at the station I had lost, I rather resolved to carve out for myself one still

lofty and more universally acknowledged. I determined to exercise, to their utmost, the little ability and knowledge I possessed; and while the increase of income, derived from my uncle's generosity, furnished me with what was necessary for my luxury, I was resolved that it should not encourage me in the indulgence of my indolence.

In this mood, and with these intentions, I repaired to the metropolis.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Cum pulchris tunicis sumet nova consilia et spes.—Hos.

And look always that they be shape
What garment that thou shalt make
Of him that can best do
With all that pertaineth thereto.—*Rom. of the Rose.*

How well I can remember the feelings with which I entered London, and took possession of the apartments prepared for me at Mivart's! A year had made a vast alteration in my mind; I had ceased to regard pleasure for its own sake; I rather coveted its enjoyments, as the great sources of worldly distinction. I was not the less a coxcomb than heretofore, nor the less fastidious in my horses and my dress; but I viewed these matters in a light wholly different from that in which I had hitherto regarded them. Beneath all the carelessness of my exterior, my mind was close, keen, and inquiring; and under all the affectations of foppery, and the levity of manner, I veiled an ambition the most extensive in its objects, and a resolution the most daring in the accomplishment of its means.

I was still lounging over my breakfast, on the second morning of my arrival, when Mr. —, the tailor, was announced.

"Good morning, Mr. Pelham; happy to see you returned. Do I disturb you too early? shall I wait on you again?"

"No, Mr. —, I am ready to receive you. You may renew my measure."

"We are a very good figure, Mr. Pelham; very good figure," replied the Schneider, surveying me from head to foot, while he was preparing his measure; "we want a little assistance though; we must be padded well here, we must have our chest thrown out, and have an additional inch across the shoulders; we must live for effect in this world, Mr. Pelham; a *leetle* tighter round the waist, eh?"

"Mr. —," said I, "you will take, first, my exact measure, and, secondly, my exact instructions. Have you done the first?"

"We are done now, Mr. Pelham," replied my *man-maker*, in a slow, solemn tone.

"You will have the goodness then

to put no stuffing of any description in my coat; you will *not* pinch me an iota tighter across the waist than is natural to that part of my body; and you will please, in your infinite mercy, to leave me as much after the fashion in which God made me, as you possibly can."

"But, sir, we *must* be padded; we are much too thin; all the gentlemen in the Life Guards are padded, sir."

"Mr. —," answered I, "you will please to speak of *us* with a separate, and not a collective pronoun; and you will let me for once have my clothes such as a gentleman, who, I beg of you to understand, is not a Life Guardsman, can wear without being mistaken for a Guy Fawkes on a fifth of November."

Mr. — looked very discomfited: "We shall not be liked, sir, when we are made—we sha'n't, I assure you. I will call on Saturday at eleven o'clock. Good morning, Mr. Pelham; we shall never be done justice to, if we do not live for effect; good morning, Mr. Pelham."

And here, as I am weary of tailors, let me reflect a little upon that divine art of which they are the professors. Alas, for the instability of all human sciences! A few short months ago, in the first edition of this memorable work, I laid down rules for costume, the value of which Fashion begins already to destroy. The thoughts which I shall now embody, shall be out of the reach of that great innovator, and applicable not to one age, but to all. To the sagacious reader, who has already discovered what portions of this work are writ in irony—what in earnest—I fearlessly commit these maxims; beseeching him to believe, with Sterne, that "everything is big with jest, and has wit in it, and instruction too,—if we can but find it out!"

MAXIMS.

I.

Do not require your dress so much to fit as to adorn you. Nature is not to be copied, but to be exalted by art. Apelles blamed Protogenes for being *too* natural.

II.

Never in your dress altogether desert that taste which is general. The world considers eccentricity in great things genius; in small things folly.

III.

Always remember that you dress to fascinate others, not yourself.

IV.

Keep your mind free from all violent affections at the hour of the toilet. A philosophical serenity is perfectly necessary to success. Helvetius says justly, that our errors arise from our passions.

V.

Remember that none but those whose courage is unquestionable, can venture to be effeminate. It was only in the field that the Spartans were accustomed to use perfumes and curl their hair

VI.

Never let the finery of chains and rings seem *your own* choice; that which naturally belongs to women should appear only worn for their sake. We dignify foppery, when we invest it with a sentiment.

VII.

To *win* the affection of your mistress, appear negligent in your costume—to *preserve* it, assiduous: the first is a sign of the *passion* of love; the second, of its *respect*.

VIII.

A man must be a profound calculator to be a consummate dresser. One must not dress the same, whether one goes to a minister or a mistress; an avaricious uncle, or an ostentatious cousin: there is no diplomacy more subtle than that of dress.

IX.

Is the great man whom you would conciliate a coxcomb?—go to him in a waistcoat like his own. "Imitation," says the author of Lacon, "is the sincerest flattery."

X.

The handsome may be showy in dress, the plain should study to be unexceptionable; just as in great men we look for something to admire—in ordinary men we ask for nothing to forgive.

XI.

There is a study of dress for the aged, as well as for the young. Inattention is no less indecorous in one than in the other; we may distinguish the taste appropriate to each, by the reflection that youth is made to be loved—age to be respected.

XII.

A fool may dress gaudily, but a fool cannot dress well—for to dress well requires judgment; and Rochefoucault says with truth, "*On est quelquefois un sot avec de l'esprit, mais on ne l'est jamais avec du jugement.*"

XIII.

There may be more pathos in the fall of a collar, or the curl of a lock, than the shallow think for. Should we be so apt as we are now to compassionate the misfortunes, and to forgive the insincerity of Charles I., if his pictures had portrayed him in a

bob-wig and a pig-tail? Vandyke was a greater sophist than Hume.

XIV.

The most graceful principle of dress is neatness—the most vulgar is preciseness.

XV.

Dress contains the two codes of morality—private and public. Attention is the duty we owe to others—cleanliness that which we owe to ourselves.

XVI.

Dress so that it may never be said of you "What a well-dressed man!"—but, "What a gentlemanlike man!"

XVII.

Avoid many colours; and seek, by some one prevalent and quiet tint, to sober down the others. Apelles used only four colours, and always subdued those which were more florid, by a darkening varnish.

XVIII.

Nothing is superficial to a deep observer! It is in trifles that the mind betrays itself. "In what part of that letter," said a king to the wisest of living diplomatists, "did you discover irresolution?"—"In its *ns* and *gs*!" was the answer.

XIX.

A very benevolent man will never shock the feelings of others, by an excess either of inattention or display; you may doubt, therefore, the philanthropy both of a sloven and a fop.

XX.

There is an indifference to pleasure in a stocking down at heel—but there may be malevolence in a diamond ring.

XXI.

Inventions in dressing should resemble Addison's definition of fine writing, and consist of "refinements which are natural, without being obvious."

XXII.

He who esteems trifles for themselves, is a trifler—he who esteems them for the conclusions to be drawn from them, or the advantage to which they can be put is a philosopher

CHAPTER XLV.

Tantôt, Monseigneur le Marquis à cheval—

Tantôt, Monsieur du Mazin du bout!—L'Art de se Proméner à Cheval.

My cabriolet was at the door, and I was preparing to enter, when I saw a groom managing, with difficulty, a remarkably fine and spirited horse. As, at that time, I was chiefly occupied with the desire of making as perfect a stud as my fortune would allow, I sent my cab boy (*vulgo* Tiger) to inquire of the groom, whether the horse was to be sold, and to whom it belonged.

"It was not to be disposed of," was the answer, "and it belonged to Sir Reginald Glanville."

The name thrilled through me; I drove after the groom, and inquired Sir Reginald Glanville's address. His house, the groom informed me, was at No. — Pall Mall. I resolved to call that day, but, as the groom said that he was rarely at home till late in the afternoon, I drove first to Lady Roseville's to talk about Almack's and the *beau monde*, and be initiated into the newest scandal and satire of the day.

Lady Roseville was at home; I found the room half full of women: the beautiful countess was one of the few persons extant who admit people of a morning. She received me with marked kindness. Seeing that——, who was esteemed, among his friends, the handsomest man of the day, had risen from his seat, next to Lady Roseville, in order to make room for me I

negligently and quietly dropped into it, and answered his grave and angry stare at my presumption, with my very sweetest and most condescending smile. Heaven be praised, the handsomest man of the day is never the chief object in the room, when Henry Pelham and his guardian angel, termed by his enemies, his *self-esteem*, once enter it.

I rattled on through a variety of subjects till Lady Roseville at last said, laughingly, "I see, Mr. Pelham, that you have learned, at least, the art of making the *frais* of the conversation since your visit to Paris."

"I understand you," answered I "you mean that I talk too much; it is true—I own the offence—nothing is so unpopular! Even I, the civillest, best natured, most unaffected person in all Europe, am almost disliked, positively disliked, for that sole and simple crime. Ah! the most beloved man in society is that deaf and dumb person, *comment s'appelle-t-il?*"

"Yes," said Lady Roseville, "Popularity is a goddess best worshipped by negatives; and the fewer claims one has to be admired, the more pretensions one has to be beloved."

"Perfectly true, in general," said I—"for instance, I make the rule, and you the exception. I, a perfect paragon, am hated because I am one,

you, a perfect paragon, are idolised in spite of it. But tell me, what literary news is there? I am tired of the trouble of idleness, and in order to enjoy a little dignified leisure, intend to set up as a *savant*."

"Oh, Lady C—— is going to write a Commentary on Ude; and Madame de Genlis a Proof of the Apocrypha. The Duke of N——e is publishing a Treatise on 'Toleration;' and Lord L—— an Essay on 'Self-knowledge.' As for news more remote, I hear that the Dey of Algiers is finishing an 'Ode to Liberty,' and the College of Caffraria preparing a volume of voyages to the North Pole!"

"Now," said I, "if I retail this information with a serious air, I will lay a wager that I find plenty of believers; for fiction, uttered solemnly, is much more like probability than truth uttered doubtfully:—else how do the priests of Brama and Mahomet live?"

"Ah! now you grow too profound, Mr. Pelham!"

"*C'est vrai—but—*"

"Tell me," interrupted Lady Roseville, "how it happens that you, who talk eruditely enough upon matters of erudition, should talk so lightly upon matters of levity?"

"Why," said I, rising to depart "very great minds are apt to think that all which they set *any* value upon, is of equal importance. Thus Hesiod, who, you know, was a capital poet, though rather an imitator of Shenstone, tells us that God bestowed valour on some men, and on others a genius for dancing. It was reserved for me, Lady Roseville, to unite the two perfections. Adieu!"

"Thus," said I, when I was once more alone—"thus do we 'play the fools with the time,' until Fate brings that which is better than folly; and, standing idly upon the sea-shore, till we can catch the favouring wind which is to waft the vessel of our destiny to enterprise and fortune. amuse ourselves with the weeds and the pebbles which are within our reach!"

CHAPTER XLVI.

There was a youth who, as with toil and travel,
 Had grown quite weak and grey before his time ;
 Nor any could the restless grief unravel
 Which burned within him, withering up his prime,
 And goading him, like fiends, from land to land.—P. B. SHELLEY.

FROM Lady Roseville's I went to Glanville's house. He was at home. I was ushered into a beautiful apartment, hung with rich damask, and interspersed with a profusion of mirrors. Beyond, to the right of this room, was a small closet, fitted up with books. This room, evidently a favourite retreat, was adorned at close intervals with girandoles of silver and mother of pearl ; the handles of the doors were of the same material.

This closet opened upon a spacious and lofty saloon, the walls of which were covered with the masterpieces of Flemish and Italian art. Through this apartment I was led, by the obsequious and bowing valet, into a fourth room, in which, negligently robed in his dressing-gown, sate Reginald Glanville : — " Good Heavens," thought I, as I approached him, " can this be the man who made his residence, by choice, in a miserable hovel, exposed to all the damps, winds, and vapours, that the prolific generosity of an English Heaven ever begot !"

Our meeting was cordial in the extreme. Glanville, though still pale and thin, appeared in much better health than I had yet seen him since our boyhood. He was, or affected to be, in the most joyous spirits : and when his blue eye lighted up, in answer to the merriment of his lips, and his noble and glorious cast of countenance shone out, as if it had never been clouded by grief or passion,

I thought, as I looked at him, that I had never seen so perfect a specimen of masculine beauty, at once physical and intellectual.

" My dear Pelham," said Glanville, " let us see a great deal of each other : I live very much alone : I have an excellent cook sent me over from France by the celebrated gourmand Maréchal de ———. I dine every day exactly at eight, and never accept an invitation to dine elsewhere. My table is always laid for three, and you will, therefore, be sure of finding a dinner here every day you have no better engagement. What think you of my taste in pictures ?"

" I have only to say," answered I, " that since I am so often to dine with you, I hope your taste in wines will be one half as good."

" We are all," said Glanville, with a faint smile, " we are all, in the words of the true old proverb, ' children of a larger growth.' Our first toy is love—our second, display, according as our ambition prompts us to exert it. Some place it in horses—some in honours, some in feasts, and some—*voici un exemple*—in furniture or pictures. So true it is, Pelham, that our earliest longings are the purest : in love, we covet goods for the sake of the one beloved : in display, for our own : thus, our first stratum of mind produces fruit for others ; our second becomes niggardly, and bears only sufficient for ourselves. But enough of my morals—will you drive me out,

if I dress quicker than you ever saw man dress before?"

"No," said I; "for I make it a rule never to drive out a badly dressed friend; take time, and I will let you accompany me."

"So be it, then. Do you ever read? if so, my books are made to be opened, and you may toss them over while I am at my toilet. Look—here are two works, one of poetry—one on the Catholic Question—both dedicated to me. Seymour—my waistcoat. See what it is to furnish a house differently from other people; one becomes a *bel esprit*, and a *Mecenas*, immediately. Believe me, if you are rich enough to afford it, that there is no passport to fame like eccentricity. Seymour—my coat. I am at your service, Pelham. Believe hereafter that one may dress well in a short time?"

"One may do it, but not two—allons!"

I observed that Glanville was dressed in the deepest mourning, and imagined, from that circumstance, and his accession to the title I heard applied to him for the first time, that his father was only just dead. In this opinion I was soon undeceived. He had been dead for some years. Glanville spoke to me of his family:—"To my mother," said he, "I am particularly anxious to introduce you; of my sister I say nothing; I expect you to be surprised with her. I love her more than any thing on earth *now*," and as Glanville said this, a paler shade passed over his face.

We were in the Park—Lady Roseville passed us—we both bowed to her; as she returned our greeting, I was struck with the deep and sudden blush which overspread her countenance. "That can't be for *me*?" thought I. I looked towards Glanville; his countenance had recovered its serenity, and was settled into its usual proud, but not displeasing, calmness of expression.

"Do you know Lady Roseville well?" said I.

"Very," answered Glanville, laconically, and changed the conversation. As we were leaving the Park, through Cumberland Gate, we were stopped by a blockade of carriages; a voice, loud, harsh, and vulgarly *accented*, called out to Glanville by his name. I turned, and saw Thornton.

"For Heaven's sake, Pelham, drive on," cried Glanville; "let me, for once, escape that atrocious plebeian."

Thornton was crossing the road towards us; I waved my hand to him civilly enough (for I never cut anybody), and drove rapidly through the other gate, without appearing to notice his design of speaking to us.

"Thank Heaven!" said Glanville, and sank back in a reverie, from which I could not awaken him, till he was set down at his own door.

When I returned to Mirart's, I found a card from Lord Dawton, and a letter from my mother.

"MY DEAR HENRY, (began the letter,)

"Lord Dawton having kindly promised to call upon you, personally, with this note, I cannot resist the opportunity that promise affords me, of saying how desirous I am that you should cultivate his acquaintance. He is, you know, among the most prominent leaders of the Opposition: and should the Whigs, by any possible chance, ever come into power, he would have a great chance of becoming prime minister. I trust, however, that you will not adopt that side of the question. The Whigs are a horrid set of people (*politically speaking*), vote for the Roman Catholics, and never get into place; they give very good dinners, however, and till you have decided upon your politics, you may as well make the most of them. I hope, by the by, that you will see a great deal of Lord Vincent: every one speaks highly of

his talents; and only two weeks ago, he said, publicly, that he thought you the most promising young man, and the most naturally clever person, he had ever met. I hope that you will be attentive to your parliamentary duties; and,—oh, Henry, be sure that you see Cartwright, the dentist, as soon as possible.

"I intend hastening to London three weeks earlier than I had intended, in order to be useful to you. I have written already to dear Lady Roseville, begging her to *introduce* you at Lady C's, and Lady——; the only places worth going to at present. They tell me there is a horrid, vulgar, ignorant book come out about——. As you ought to be well versed in modern literature, I hope you will read it, and give me your opinion. Adieu, my dear Henry, ever your affectionate mother,

"FRANCES PELHAM."

I was still at my solitary dinner, when the following note was brought me from Lady Roseville:—

"DEAR MR. PELHAM,

"Lady Frances wishes Lady C—to be made acquainted with you; this is her night, and I therefore enclose you a card. As I dine at——House, I shall have an opportunity of making your *éloge* before your arrival. Your's sincerely,

"C. ROSEVILLE."

I wonder, thought I, as I made my toilet, whether or not Lady Roseville is enamoured of her new correspondent? I went very early, and before I retired, my vanity was undeceived. Lady Roseville was playing at *écarté*, when I entered. She beckoned to me to approach. I did. Her antagonist was Mr. Bedford, a natural son of the Duke of Shrewsbury, and one of the best natured and best looking dandies about town:

there was, of course, a great crowd round the table. Lady Roseville played incomparably; bets were high in her favour. Suddenly her countenance changed—her hand trembled—her presence of mind forsook her. She lost the game. I looked up and saw just opposite to her, but apparently quite careless and unmoved, Reginald Glanville. We had only time to exchange nods, for Lady Roseville rose from the table, took my arm, and walked to the other end of the room, in order to introduce me to my hostess.

I spoke to her a few words, but she was absent and inattentive; my penetration required no farther proof to convince me that she was not wholly insensible to the attractions of Glanville. Lady——was as civil and silly as the generality of Lady Blanks are: and feeling very much bored, I soon retired to an obscurer corner of the room. Here Glanville joined me.

"It is but seldom," said he, "that I come to these places; to-night my sister persuaded me to venture forth."

"Is she here?" said I.

"She is," answered he; "she has just gone into the refreshment room with my mother; and when she returns, I will introduce you."

While Glanville was yet speaking, three middle-aged ladies, who had been talking together with great vehemence for the last ten minutes, approached us.

"Which is he?—which is he?" said two of them, in no inaudible accents.

"This," replied the third; and coming up to Glanville, she addressed him, to my great astonishment, in terms of the most hyperbolical panegyric.

"Your work is wonderful! wonderful!" said she.

"Oh! quite—quite!" echoed the other two.

"I can't say," recommenced the

Coryphæa, "that I like the moral—at least not quite; no, not quite."

"Not quite," repeated her coadjutrices.

Glanville drew himself up with his most stately air, and after three profound bows, accompanied by a smile of the most unequivocal contempt, he turned on his heel, and sauntered away.

"Did your grace ever see such a bear?" said one of the echoes.

"Never," said the duchess, with a mortified air; "but I will have him yet. How handsome he is for an author!"

I was descending the stairs in the last state of *ennui*, when Glanville laid his hand on my shoulder.

"Shall I take you home?" said he: "my carriage has just drawn up."

I was too glad to answer in the affirmative.

How long have you been an

author?" said I, when we were seated in Glanville's carriage.

"Not many days," he replied. "I have tried one resource after another—all—all in vain. Oh, God! that for me there *could* exist such a blessing as *fiction*! Must I be ever the martyr of one burning, lasting, indelible *truth*!"

Glanville uttered these words with a peculiar wildness and energy of tone: he then paused abruptly for a minute, and continued, with an altered voice—

"Never, my dear Pelham, be tempted by any inducement into the pleasing errors of print: from that moment you are public property; and the last monster at Exeter 'Change has more liberty than you; but here we are at Mivart's. Adieu—I will call on you to-morrow, if my wretched state of health will allow me."

And with these words we parted.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Ambition is lottery, where, however uneven the chances, there are some prizes; but in dissipation, every one draws a blank.—*Letters of STEPHEN MONTAGUE.*

THE season was not far advanced before I grew heartily tired of what are *nicknamed* its gaieties; I shrank, by rapid degrees, into a very small orbit, from which I rarely moved. I had already established a certain reputation for eccentricity, fashion, and, to my great astonishment, also for talent; and my pride was satisfied with finding myself universally run after, whilst I indulged my inclinations by rendering myself universally scarce. I saw much of Vincent, whose varied acquirements and great talents became more and more perceptible, both as my own acquaintance with him increased, and as the political events with which that year was pregnant, called forth their

exertion and display. I went occasionally to Lady Roseville's, and was always treated rather as a long-known friend, than an ordinary acquaintance; nor did I undervalue this distinction, for it was part of her pride to render her house not only as splendid, but as agreeable, as her command over society enabled her to effect.

At the House of Commons my visits would have been duly paid, but for one trifling occurrence, upon which, as it is a very sore subject, I shall dwell as briefly as possible. I had scarcely taken my seat, before I was forced to relinquish it. My unsuccessful opponent, Mr. Lufton, preferred a petition against me, for what he called undue

means. Heaven knows what he meant; I am sure the House did not, for they turned me out, and declared Mr. Luffton duly elected.

Never was there such a commotion in the Glenmorris family before. My uncle was seized with the gout in his stomach, and my mother shut herself up with Tremaine, and one China monster for a whole week. As for me, though I writhed at heart, I bore the calamity philosophically enough in external appearance; nor did I the less busy myself in political matters: with what address and success, good or bad, I endeavoured to supply the loss of my parliamentary influence, the reader will see, when it suits the plot of this history to touch upon such topics.

Glanville, I saw continually. When in tolerable spirits, he was an entertaining, though never a frank nor a communicative companion. His conversation then was lively, yet without wit, and sarcastic, though without bitterness. It abounded also in philosophical reflections and terse maxims, which always brought improvement, or, at the worst, allowed discussion. He was a man of even vast powers—of deep thought—of luxuriant, though dark imagination, and of great miscellaneous, though, perhaps, ill arranged erudition. He was fond of paradoxes in reasoning, and supported them with a subtlety and strength of mind, which Vincent, who admired him greatly, told me he had never seen surpassed.

He was subject, at times, to a gloom and despondency, which seemed almost like aberration of intellect. At those hours he would remain perfectly silent, and apparently forgetful of my presence, and of every object around him.

It was only then, when the play of his countenance was vanished, and his features were still and set, that you saw in their full extent, the dark and deep traces of premature decay. His cheek was hollow and hueless, his

eye dim, and of that visionary and glassy aspect which is never seen but in great mental or bodily disease, and which, according to the superstitions of some nations, implies a mysterious and unearthly communion of the soul with the beings of another world. From these trances he would sometimes start abruptly, and renew any conversation broken off before, as if wholly unconscious of the length of his reverie. At others, he would rise slowly from his seat, and retire into his own apartment, from which he never emerged during the rest of the day.

But the reader must bear in mind that there was nothing artificial or affected in his musings, of whatever complexion they might be; nothing like the dramatic brown studies, and quick starts, which young gentlemen, in love with Lara and Lord Byron, are apt to practise. There never, indeed, was a character that possessed less cant of any description. His work, which was a singular, wild tale—of mingled passion and reflection—was, perhaps, of too original, certainly of too abstract a nature, to suit the ordinary novel readers of the day. It did not acquire popularity for itself, but it gained great reputation for the author. It also inspired every one who read it with a vague and indescribable interest to see and know the person who had composed so singular a work.

This interest he was the first to laugh at, and to disappoint. He shrank from all admiration and from all sympathy. At the moment when a crowd assembled round him, and every ear was bent to catch the words, which came alike from so beautiful a lip, and so strange and imaginative a mind, it was his pleasure to utter some sentiment totally different from his written opinions, and utterly destructive of the sensation he had excited. But it was very rarely that he exposed

himself to these "trials of an author." He went out little to any other house but Lady Roseville's, and it was seldom more than once a week that he was seen even there. Lonely, and singular in mind and habits, he lived in the world like a person occupied by a separate object, and possessed of a separate existence from that of his fellow-beings. He was luxurious and splendid, beyond all men, in his habits, rather than his tastes. His table groaned beneath a weight of silver, too costly for the daily service even of a prince; but he had no pleasure in surveying it. His wines and viands were of the most exquisite description; but he scarcely tasted them. Yet, what may seem inconsistent, he was averse to all ostentation and show in the eyes of others. He admitted very few into his society—no one so intimately as myself. I never once saw more than three persons at his table. He seemed, in his taste for the arts, in his love of literature, and his pursuit after fame, to be, as he himself said, eternally

endeavouring to forget and eternally brought back to remembrance.

"I pity that man even more than I admire him," said Vincent to me, one night when we were walking home from Glanville's house. "His is, indeed, the disease *nullâ medicabilis herbâ*. Whether it is the past or the present that afflicts him—whether it is the memory of past evil, or the satiety of present good, he has taken to his heart the bitterest philosophy of life. He does not reject its blessings—he gathers them around him, but as a stone gathers moss—cold, hard, unsoftened by the freshness and the greenness which surround it. As a circle can only touch a circle in one place, everything that life presents to him, wherever it comes from—to whatever portion of his soul it is applied—can find but one point of contact; and that is the soreness of affliction: whether it is the *oblivio* of the *otium* that he requires, he finds equally that he is for ever in want of one treasure:—'*neque gemmis neque purpurâ venale nec auro.*'"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Mons. Jourdain. Etes-vous fou de l'aller quereller—lui qui entend la tierce et la quarte, et qui sait tuer un homme par raison démonstrative?

Le Maître à Danser. Je me moque de sa raison démonstrative, et de sa tierce et de sa quarte.—MOLIERE.

"HOLLO, my good friend; how are you?—d——d glad to see you in England," vociferated a loud, clear, good-humoured voice, one cold morning, as I was shivering down Brook-street into Bond-street. I turned, and beheld Lord Dartmore, of *Rocher de Cancale* memory. I returned his greeting with the same cordiality with which it was given; and I was forthwith saddled with Dartmore's arm, and dragged up Bond-street, into that borough of all noisy, riotous, unrefined good fellows, yeapt ——'s Hotel.

Here we were soon plunged into a small, low apartment, which Dartmore informed me was his room, and which was crowded with a score of the most stalwart youths that I ever saw out of a marching regiment.

Dartmore was still gloriously redolent of Oxford: his companions were all extracts from Christchurch; and his favourite occupations were boxing and hunting—scenes at the Fives' Courts—nights in the Cider Cellar—and mornings at Bow-street. Figure to yourself a fitter companion for the hero and writer of these adventures! The table was covered with boxing gloves, single sticks, two ponderous pair of dumb bells, a large pewter pot of porter, and four foils; one snapped in the middle.

"Well," cried Dartmore, to two strapping youths, with their coats off, "which was the conqueror?"

"Oh, it is not yet decided," was the answer; and forthwith the bigger one

hit the lesser a blow with his boxing glove, heavy enough to have felled Ulysses, who, if I recollect aright, was rather "*a game blood*" in such encounters.

This slight salute was forthwith the prelude to an encounter, which the whole train crowded round to witness;—I, among the rest, pretending an equal ardour, and an equal interest, and hiding, like many persons in a similar predicament, a most trembling spirit beneath a most valorous exterior.

When the match (which terminated in favour of the lesser champion) was over, "Come, Pelham," said Dartmore, "let me take up the gloves with you."

"You are too good!" said I, for the first time using my drawing-room drawl. A wink and a grin went round the room.

"Well, then, will you fence with Staunton, or play at single stick with me?" said the short, thick, bullying, impudent, vulgar Earl of Calton.

"Why," answered I, "I am a poor hand at the foils, and a still worse at the sticks; but I have no objection to exchange a cut or two at the latter with Lord Calton."

"No, no!" said the good-natured Dartmore;—"no! Calton is the best stick-player I ever knew;" and then whispering me, he added, "and the hardest hitter—and he never spares, either."

"Really," said I aloud, in my most affected tone, "it is a great pity, for I am excessively delicate, but as I said

I would engage him, I don't like to retract. Pray let me look at the hilt: I hope the basket is strong: I would not have my knuckles rapped for the world—now for it. I'm in a deuced fright, Dartmore;" and so saying, and inwardly chuckling at the universal pleasure depicted in the countenances of Calton and the bystanders, who were all rejoiced at the idea of the "dandy being drubbed," I took the stick, and pretended great awkwardness, and lack of grace in the position I chose.

Calton placed himself in the most scientific attitude, assuming at the same time an air of *hauteur* and *nonchalance*, which seemed to call for the admiration it met.

"Do we allow hard hitting?" said I.

"Oh! by all means," answered Calton, eagerly.

"Well," said I, settling my own *chapeau*, "had not you better put on your hat?"

"Oh, no," answered Calton, imperiously; "I can take pretty good care of my head;" and with these words we commenced.

I remained at first nearly upright, not availing myself in the least of my superiority in height, and only acting

on the defensive. Calton played well enough for a gentleman; but he was no match for one who had, at the age of thirteen, beat the Life Guardsmen at Angelo's. Suddenly, when I had excited a general laugh at the clumsy success with which I warded off a most rapid attack of Calton's, I changed my position, and keeping Calton at arm's length till I had driven him towards a corner, I took advantage of a haughty imprudence on his part, and, by a common enough move in the game, drew back from a stroke aimed at my limbs, and suffered the whole weight of my weapon to fall so heavily upon his head, that I felled him to the ground in an instant.

I was sorry for the severity of the stroke the moment after it was inflicted; but never was punishment more deserved. We picked up the discomfited hero, and placed him on a chair to recover his senses; meanwhile I received the congratulations of the conclave with a frank alteration of manner which delighted them; and I found it impossible to get away, till I had promised to dine with Dartmore, and spend the rest of the evening in the society of his friends.

CHAPTER XLIX.

— Heroes mischievously gay,
 Lords of the street and terrors of the way,
 Flush'd as they are with folly, youth, and wine.—**JOHN:ON'S London.**

Hol. Novi hominem tanquam te—his humour is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye ambitious, his gait majestic, and his general behaviour vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical.—**SHAKESPEARE.**

I WENT a little after seven o'clock to keep my dinner engagement at ——'s; for very young men are seldom unpunctual at dinner. We sat down, six in number, to a repast at once incredibly bad, and ridiculously extravagant; turtle without fat—venison without flavour—champagne with the taste of a gooseberry, and hock with the properties of a pomegranate.* Such is the constant habit of young men: they think anything expensive is necessarily good, and they purchase poison at a dearer rate than the most medicine-loving hypochondriac in England!

Of course, all the knot declared the dinner was superb; called in the master to eulogise him in person, and made him, to his infinite dismay, swallow a bumper of his own hock. Poor man! they mistook his reluctance for his diffidence, and forced him to wash it away in another potation. With many a wry face of grateful humility, he left the room, and we then proceeded to pass the bottle with the *suicidal* determination of defeated Romans. You may imagine that we were not long in arriving at the devoutly wished-for consummation of comfortable inebriety; and with our eyes reeling, our cheeks burning, and our brave spirits full ripe for a quarrel, we sallied out at eleven

o'clock, vowing death, dread, and destruction to all the sober portion of his majesty's subjects.

We came to a dead halt in Arlington street, which, as it was the quietest spot in the neighbourhood, we deemed a fitting place for the arrangement of our forces. Dartmore, Staunton (a tall, thin, well formed, silly youth) and myself, marched first, and the remaining three followed. We gave each other the most judicious admonitions as to propriety of conduct, and then, with a shout that alarmed the whole street, we renewed our way. We passed on safely enough till we got to Charing-Cross, having only been thrice upbraided by the watchmen, and once threatened by two ear-men of prodigious size, to whose wives or sweethearts we had, to our infinite peril, made some gentle overtures. When, however, we had just passed the Opera Colonnade, we were accosted by a bevy of buxom Cyprians, as merry and as drunk as ourselves. We halted for a few minutes in the midst of the kennel, to confabulate with our new friends, and a very amicable and intellectual conversation ensued. Dartmore was an adept in the art of slang, and he found himself fairly matched, by more than one of the fair and gentle creatures by whom we were surrounded. Just, however, as we were all in high glee, Staunton made a trifling discovery, which

* Which is *not* an astringent fruit.

turned the merriment of the whole scene into strife, war, and confusion. A bouncing lass, whose hands were as ready as her charms, had quietly helped herself to a watch which Staunton wore, *à la mode*, in his waistcoat pocket. Drunken as the youth was at that time, and dull as he was at all others, he was not without the instinctive penetration with which all human bipeds watch over their individual goods and chattels. He sprang aside from the endearments of the syren, grasped her arm, and in a voice of querulous indignation, accused her of the theft.

"Then rose the cry of women—shrill
As shriek of goshawk on the bill."

Never were my ears so stunned. The angry authors in the adventures of Gil Blas were nothing to the disputants in the kennel at Charing-Cross: we rowed, swore, slanged, with a Christian meekness and forbearance which would have rejoiced Mr. Wilberforce to the heart, and we were already preparing ourselves for a more striking engagement, when we were most unwelcomely interrupted by the presence of three watchmen.

"Take away this—this—d——d woman," hiccuped out Staunton, "she has sto—len—(hiccup)—my watch"—(hiccup).

"No such thing, watchman," halloed out the accused, "the b—— counter-skipper never *had* any watch! he only filched a twopenny-halfpenny gilt-chain out of his master, Levi, the pawnbroker's window, and stuck it in his *eel-skin* to make a show: ye did, ye pitiful, lanky-chopped son of a dog-fish, ye did."

"Come, come," said the watchman, "move on, move on."

"You be d——d, for a Charley!" said one of our gang.

"Ho! ho! master jackanapes, I shall give you a cooling in the watch-house if you tips us any of your jaw.

I dare say the young *oman* here, is quite right about ye, and ye never had any watch at all, at all."

"You are a liar!" cried Staunton; "and you are all in with each other, like a pack of rogues as you are."

"I'll tell you what, young gemman," said another watchman,* who was a more potent, grave, and reverend signor than his comrades, "if you do not move on instantly, and let those decent young *omen* alone, I'll take you all up before Sir Richard."

"Charley, my boy," said Dartmore, "did you ever get thrashed for impertinence?"

The last mentioned watchman took upon himself the reply to this interrogatory by a very summary proceeding: he collared Dartmore, and his companions did the same kind office to us. This action was not committed with impunity: in an instant two of the moon's minions, staffs, lanterns, and all, were measuring their length at the foot of their namesake of royal memory; the remaining Dogberry was, however, a tougher assailant; he held Staunton so firmly in his gripe, that the poor youth could scarcely breathe out a faint and feeble d—— ye of defiance, and with his disengaged hand he made such an admirable use of his rattle, that we were surrounded in a trice.

As when an ant-hill is invaded, from every quarter and crevice of the mound arise and pour out an angry host, of whose previous existence the unwary assailant had not dreamt; so from every lane, and alley, and street, and crossing, came fast and far the champions of the night.

"Gentlemen," said Dartmore, "we must fly; *saute qui peut*." We wanted no stronger admonition, and accordingly, all of us who were able, set off

* The reader will remember that this work was written before the Institution of the New Police.

with the utmost velocity with which God had gifted us. I have some faint recollection that I myself headed the flight. I remember well that I dashed *up* the Strand, and dashed *down* a singular little shed, from which emanated the steam of tea, and a sharp, querulous scream of "All hot—all hot; a penny a pint." I see, now, by the dim light of retrospection, a vision of an old woman in the kennel, and a pewter pot of mysterious ingredients precipitated into a greengrocer's shop, "*te virides inter lauros*," as Vincent would have said. On we went, faster and faster, as the rattle rang in our ears, and the tramp of the enemy echoed after us in hot pursuit.

"The *devil* take the hindmost," said Dartmore, breathlessly (as he kept up with me).

"The watchman has saved his majesty the trouble," answered I, looking back and seeing one of our friends in the clutch of the pursuers.

"On, on!" was Dartmore's only reply.

At last, after innumerable perils, and various immersements into back passages, and courts, and alleys, which, like the chicaneries of law, preserved and befriended us, in spite of all the efforts of justice, we fairly found ourselves in safety in the midst of a great square.

Here we paused, and after ascertaining our individual safeties, we looked round to ascertain the sum total of the general loss. Alas! we were wofully shorn of our beams—we were reduced one-half: only three out of the six survived the conflict and the flight.

"Half," (said the companion of Dartmore and myself, whose name was Tringle, and who was a dabbler in science, of which he was not a little vain) "half is less worthy than the whole; but the half is more worthy than nonentity."

"An axiom," said I, "not to be

disputed; but now that we are safe, and have time to think about it, are you not slightly of opinion that we behaved somewhat scurvily to our better half, in leaving it so quietly in the hands of the Philistines?"

"By no means," answered Dartmore. "In a party, whose members make no pretensions to sobriety, it would be too hard to expect that persons who are scarcely capable of taking care of themselves, should take care of other people. No; we have in all these exploits, only the one maxim of self-preservation."

"Allow me," said Tringle, seizing me by the coat, "to explain it to you on scientific principles. You will find, in hydrostatics, that the attraction of cohesion is far less powerful in fluids than in solids; viz. that persons who have been converting their 'solid flesh' into wine skins, cannot stick so close to one another as when they are sober."

"Bravo, Tringle!" cried Dartmore; "and now, Pelham, I hope your delicate scruples are, after so luminous an *éclaircissement*, set at rest for ever."

"You have convinced me," said I; "let us leave the unfortunates to their fate, and Sir Richard. What is now to be done?"

"Why, in the first place," answered Dartmore, "let us reconnoitre. Does any one know this spot?"

"Not I," said both of us. We inquired of an old fellow, who was tottering home under the same Bacchanalian auspices as ourselves, and found we were in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"Which shall we do?" asked I, "stroll home; or parade the streets, visit the Cider-Cellar, and the Finish, and kiss the first lass we meet in the morning bringing her charms and carrots to Covent Garden Market?"

"The latter," cried Dartmore and Tringle, "without doubt."

"Come, then," said I, "let us investigate Holborn, and dip into St

Giles's, and then find our way into some more known corner of the globe."

"Amen!" said Dartmore, and accordingly we renewed our march. We wound along a narrow lane, tolerably well known, I imagine, to the gentlemen of the quill, and entered Holborn. There was a beautiful still moon above us, which cast its light over a drowsy stand of hackney coaches, and shed a 'silver sadness' over the thin visages and sombre vestments of two guardians of the night, who regarded us, we thought, with a very ominous aspect of suspicion.

We strolled along, leisurely enough, till we were interrupted by a miserable-looking crowd, assembled round a dull, dingy, melancholy shop, from which gleamed a solitary candle, whose long, spinster-like wick was flirting away with an east wind, at a most unconscionable rate. Upon the haggard and worn countenances of the bystanders, was depicted one general and sympathising expression of eager, envious, wistful anxiety, which predominated so far over the various characters of each, as to communicate something of a likeness to all. It was an impress of such a seal as you might imagine, not the arch-fiend, but one of his subordinate shepherds, would have set upon each of his flock.

Amid this crowd, I recognised more than one face which I had often seen in my equestrian lounges through town, peering from the shoulders of some intrusive, ragamuffin, wages-less lackey, and squealing out of its wretched, unpampered mouth, the everlasting query of "*Want your oss held, Sir?*" The rest were made up of unfortunate women of the vilest and most ragged description, aged itinerants, with features seared with famine, bleared eyes, dropping jaws, shivering limbs, and all the mortal signs of hopeless and aidless, and, worst of all,

breadless infirmity. Here and there an Irish accent broke out in the oaths of national impatience, and was answered by the shrill, broken voice of some decrepit but indefatigable votaries of pleasure—(*Pleasure!*) but the chief character of the meeting was *silence*;—silence, eager, heavy, engrossing; and, above them all, shone out the quiet moon, so calm, so holy, so breathing of still happiness and unpolluted glory, as if it never looked upon the traces of human passion, and misery, and sin. We stood for some moments contemplating the group before us, and then, following the steps of an old, withered crone, who, with a cracked cup in her hand, was pushing her way through the throng, we found ourselves in that dreary pandæmonium, at once the origin and the refuge of humble vices—a *Gin-shop*.

"Poor devils," said Dartmore, to two or three of the nearest and eagerest among the crowd, "come in, and I will treat you."

The invitation was received with a promptness which must have been the most gratifying compliment to the inviter; and thus Want, which is the mother of Invention, does not object, now and then, to a bantling by Politeness.

We stood by the counter while our *protégés* were served, in silent observation. In low vice, to me, there is always something too gloomy, almost too *fearful* for light mirth; the contortions of the madman are stronger than those of the fool, but one does not laugh at them; the sympathy is for the cause—not the effect.

Leaning against the counter at one corner, and fixing his eyes deliberately and unmovingly upon us, was a man about the age of fifty, dressed in a costume of singular fashion, apparently pretending to an antiquity of taste, correspondent with that of the material. This person wore a large cocked-hat, set rather jauntily on one side,

and a black coat, which seemed an *omnium gatherum* of all abominations that had come in its way for the last ten years, and which appeared to advance equal claims (from the manner it was made and worn), to the several dignities of the art military and civil, the *arma* and the *toga*:—from the neck of the wearer hung a blue ribbon of amazing breadth, and of a very surprising assumption of newness and splendour, by no means in harmony with the other parts of the *tout ensemble*; this was the guardian of an eye-glass of black tin, and of dimensions correspondent with the size of the ribbon. Stuck under the right arm, and shaped fearfully like a sword, peeped out the hilt of a very large and sturdy-looking stick, “in war a weapon, in peace a support.”

The features of the man were in keeping with his garb; they betokened an equal mixture of the traces of poverty, and the assumption of the dignities reminiscent of a better day. Two small light-blue eyes were shaded by bushy and rather imperious brows, which lowered from under the hat, like Cerberus out of his den. These, at present, wore the dull, fixed stare of habitual intoxication, though we were not long in discovering that they had not yet forgotten to sparkle with all the quickness, and more than the roguery of youth. His nose was large, prominent, and aristocratic; nor would it have been ill formed, had not some unknown cause pushed it a little nearer towards the left ear, than would have been thought, by an equitable judge of beauty, fair to the pretensions of the right. The lines in the countenance were marked as if in iron, and had the face been perfectly composed, must have given to it a remarkably stern and sinister appearance; but at that moment there was an arch leer about the mouth, which softened, or at least

altered, the expression the features habitually wore.

“Sir,” said he, (after a few minutes of silence,) “Sir,” said he, approaching me, “will you do me the honour to take a pinch of snuff?” and so saying, he tapped a curious copper box, with a picture of his late majesty upon it.

“With great pleasure,” answered I, bowing low, “since the act is a prelude to the pleasure of your acquaintance.”

My gentleman of the gin-shop opened his box with an air, as he replied—“It is but seldom that I meet, in places of this description, gentlemen of the exterior of yourself and your friends. I am not a person very easily deceived by the outward man. Horace, sir, could not have included *me*, when he said, *specie decipimur*. I perceive that you are surprised at hearing me quote Latin. Alas! sir, in my wandering and various manner of life I may say, with Cicero and Pliny, that the study of letters has proved my greatest consolation. ‘*Gaudium mihi*,’ says the latter author, ‘*et solatium in literis: nihil tam lætum quod his non lætius, nihil tam triste quod non per has sit minus triste*.’ G—d d—n ye, you scoundrel, give me my gin! arn’t you ashamed of keeping a gentleman of my fashion so long waiting?”

This was said to the sleepy dispenser of the spirituous potations, who looked up for a moment with a dull stare, and then replied, “Your money first, Mr. Gordon—you owe us seven-pence halfpenny already.”

“Blood and confusion! speakest thou to me of halfpence! Know that thou art a mercenary varlet; yes, knave, mark that, a mercenary varlet.” The sleepy Ganymede replied not, and the wrath of Mr. Gordon subsided into a low, interrupted, internal muttering of strange oaths, which rolled and grumbled, and rattled in his throat, like distant thunder.

At length he cheered up a little—"Sir," said he, addressing Dartmore, "it is a sad thing to be dependant on these low persons; the wise among the ancients were never so wrong as when they panegyrised poverty: it is the wicked man's tempter, the good man's perdition, the proud man's curse, the melancholy man's halter."

"You are a strange old cock," said the unsophisticated Dartmore, eyeing him from head to foot; "there's half a sovereign for you."

The blunt blue eyes of Mr. Gordon sharpened up in an instant: he seized the treasure with an avidity of which, the minute after, he seemed somewhat ashamed; for he said, playing with the coin in an idle, indifferent manner—"Sir, you show a consideration, and, let me add, sir, a delicacy of feeling, unusual at your years. Sir, I shall repay you at my earliest leisure, and in the meanwhile allow me to say, that I shall be proud of the honour of your acquaintance."

"Thank-ye, old boy," said Dartmore, putting on his glove before he accepted the offered hand of his new friend, which, though it was tendered with great grace and dignity, was of a marvellously dingy and soapless aspect.

"Harkye, you d—d son of a gun!" cried Mr. Gordon, abruptly turning from Dartmore, after a hearty shake of the hand, to the man at the counter—"Harkye! give me change for this half sovereign, and be d—d to you—

and then tip us a double gill of your best: you whey-faced, liver-drenched, pence-gripping, belly-gripping, pauper-cheating, sleepy-souled Arismanes of bad spirits. Come, gentlemen, if you have nothing better to do, I'll take you to my club; we are a rare knot of us, there—all choice spirits; some of them are a little uncouth, it is true, but we are not all born Chesterfields. Sir, allow me to ask the favour of your name?"

"Dartmore."

"Mr. Dartmore, you are a gentleman. Hello! you *Liquorpond-street* of a scoundrel—having nothing of liquor but the name, you narrow, nasty, pitiful alley of a fellow, with a kennel for a body, and a sink for a soul; give me my change and my gin, you scoundrel! Humph, is that all right, you Procrustes of the counter, chopping our lawful appetites down to your rascally standard of seven-pence halfpenny? Why don't you take a motto, you Paynim dog? Here's one for you—'Measure for measure, and the devil to pay!' Humph, you pitiful toadstool of a trader, you have no more spirit than an empty water-bottle; and when you go to h—ll, they'll use you to cool the bellows. I say, you rascal, why are you worse off than the devil in a hip bath of brimstone?—because, you knave, the devil then would only be half d—d, and you're d—d all over!—Come, gentlemen, I am at your service."

CHAPTER L.

The history of a philosophical vagabond, pursuing novelty, and losing content.

Vicar of Wakefield.

WE followed our strange friend through the crowd at the door, which he elbowed on either side with the most aristocratic disdain, perfectly regardless of their jokes at his dress and manner; he no sooner got through the throng, than he stopped short (though in the midst of the kennel) and offered us his arm. This was an honour of which we were by no means desirous; for, to say nothing of the shabbiness of Mr. Gordon's exterior, there was a certain odour in his garments which was possibly less displeasing to the wearer than to his acquaintance. Accordingly, we pretended not to notice this invitation, and merely said, we would follow his guidance.

He turned up a narrow street, and after passing some of the most ill favoured alleys I ever had the happiness of beholding, he stopped at a low door; here he knocked twice, and was at last admitted by a slipshod, yawning wench, with red arms, and a profusion of sandy hair. This Hebe, Mr. Gordon greeted with a loving kiss which the kisser resented in a very unequivocal strain of disgusting reproach.

"Hush! my Queen of Clubs; my Sultana Sootina!" said Mr. Gordon; "hush! or these gentlemen will think you in earnest. I have brought three new customers to the club."

This speech somewhat softened the incensed Houri of Mr. Gordon's Paradise, and she very civilly asked us to enter.

"Stop!" said Mr. Gordon with an air of importance, "I must just step

in and ask the gentlemen to admit you;—merely a form—for a word from me will be quite sufficient." And so saying, he vanished for about five minutes.

On his return, he said, with a cheerful countenance, that we were free of the house, but that we must pay a shilling each as the customary fee. This sum was soon collected, and quietly inserted in the waistcoat pocket of our chaperon, who then conducted us up the passage into a small back room, where were sitting about seven or eight men, enveloped in smoke, and moistening the fever of the Virginian plant with various preparations of malt. On entering, I observed Mr. Gordon deposit, at a sort of bar, the sum of threepence, by which I shrewdly surmised he had gained the sum of two and ninepence by our admission. With a very arrogant air, he proceeded to the head of the table, sat himself down with a swagger, and called out, like a lusty roisterer of the true kidney, for a pint of purl and a pipe. Not to be out of fashion, we ordered the same articles of luxury.

After we had all commenced a couple of puffs at our pipes, I looked round at our fellow guests; they seemed in a very poor state of body as might naturally be supposed; and, in order to ascertain how far the condition of the mind was suited to that of the frame, I turned round to Mr. Gordon, and asked him in a whisper to give us a few hints as to the genus and characteristics of the individual components of his club. Mr. Gordon

declared himself delighted with the proposal, and we all adjourned to a separate table at the corner of the room, where Mr. Gordon, after a deep draught at the purl, thus began:—

“You observe yon thin, meagre, cadaverous animal, with rather an intelligent and melancholy expression of countenance—his name is Chitterling Crabtree: his father was an eminent coal-merchant, and left him 10,000*l*. Crabtree turned politician. When fate wishes to ruin a man of moderate abilities and moderate fortune, she makes him an orator. Mr. Chitterling Crabtree attended all the meetings at the Crown and Anchor—subscribed to the aid of the suffering friends of freedom—harangued, argued, sweated, wrote—was fined and imprisoned—regained his liberty, and married—his wife loved a community of goods no less than her spouse, and ran off with one citizen, while he was running on to the others. Chitterling dried his tears: and contented himself with the reflection, that ‘in a proper state of things,’ such an event could not have occurred.

“Mr. Crabtree’s money and life were now half gone. One does not subscribe to the friends of freedom and spout at their dinners for nothing. But the worst drop was yet in the cup. An undertaking, of the most spirited and promising nature, was conceived by the chief of the friends, and the dearest familiar of Mr. Chitterling Crabtree. Our worthy embarked his fortune in a speculation so certain of success;—crash went the speculation, and off went the friend—Mr. Crabtree was ruined. He was not, however, a man to despair at trifles. What were bread, meat, and beer to the champion of equality! He went to the meeting that very night: he said he gloried in his losses—they were for the cause: the whole conclave rang with shouts of applause, and Mr. Chitterling Crabtree went to

bed happier than ever. I need not pursue his history farther; *you see him here*—*verbum sat*. He spouts at the ‘Ciceronian,’ for half a crown a-night, and to this day subscribes sixpence a-week to the cause of ‘liberty and enlightenment all over the world.’”

“By heaven!” cried Dartmore, “he is a fine fellow, and my father shall do something for him.”

Gordon pricked up his ears, and continued,—“Now, for the second person, gentlemen, whom I am about to describe to you. You see that middle-sized stout man, with a slight squint, and a restless, lowering, cunning expression?”

“What! him in the kerseymere breeches and green jacket?” said I.

“The same,” answered Gordon. His real name, when he does not travel with an alias, is Job Jonson. He is one of the most remarkable rogues in Christendom; he is so noted a cheat, that there is not a pickpocket in England who would keep company with him if he had anything to lose. He was the favourite of his father, who intended to leave him all his fortune, which was tolerably large. He robbed him one day on the high road; his father discovered it, and disinherited him. He was placed at a merchant’s office, and rose, step by step, to be head clerk, and intended son-in-law. Three nights before his marriage, he broke open the till, and was turned out of doors the next morning. If you were going to do him the greatest favour in the world, he could not keep his hands out of your pocket till you had done it. In short, he has rogued himself out of a dozen fortunes, and a hundred friends, and managed, with incredible dexterity and success, to cheat himself into beggary and a pot of beer.”

“I beg your pardon,” said I, “but I think a sketch of your own life must be more amusing than that of any

one else : am I impertinent in asking for it?"

"Not at all," replied Mr. Gordon ; "you shall have it in as few words as possible."

"I was born a gentleman, and educated with some pains ; they told me I was a genius, and it was not very hard to persuade me of the truth of the assertion. I wrote verses to a wonder—robbed orchards according to military tactics—never played at marbles, without explaining to my competitors the theory of attraction—and was the best informed, most mischievous, little rascal in the whole school. My family were in great doubt what to do with so prodigious a wonder ; one said the law, another the church, a third talked of diplomacy, and a fourth assured my mother, that if I could but be introduced at court, I should be lord chamberlain in a twelvemonth. While my friends were deliberating, I took the liberty of deciding : I enlisted, in a fit of loyal valour, in a marching regiment ; my friends made the best of a bad job, and bought me an ensigncy.

"I recollect I read Plato the night before I went to battle ; the next morning they told me I ran away. I am sure it was a malicious invention, for if I had, I should have recollected it ; whereas, I was in such a confusion that I cannot remember a single thing that happened in the whole course of that day. About six months afterwards, I found myself out of the army, and in gaol ; and no sooner had my relations released me from the latter predicament, than I set off on my travels. At Dublin, I lost my heart to a rich widow (as I thought) ; I married her, and found her as poor as myself. Heaven knows what would have become of me, if I had not taken to drinking ; my wife scorned to be outdone by me in any thing ; she followed my example, and at the end of a year I followed her to the grave.

Since then I have taken warning, and been scrupulously sober.—Betty, my love, another pint of purl.

"I was now once more a freeman in the prime of my life ; handsome, as you see, gentlemen, and with the strength and spirit of a young Hercules. Accordingly I dried my tears, turned marker by night at a gambling house, and buck by day, in Bond-street (for I had returned to London). I remember well one morning, that his present Majesty was pleased, *en passant*, to admire my buckskins—*tempora mutantur*. Well, gentlemen, one night at a brawl in our *salon*, my nose met with a rude hint to move to the right. I went, in a great panic to the surgeon, who mended the matter, by moving it to the left. There, thank God ! it has rested in quiet ever since. It is needless to tell you the nature of the quarrel in which this accident occurred ; however, my friends thought it necessary to remove me from the situation I then held. I went once more to Ireland, and was introduced to 'a friend of freedom.' I was poor ; that circumstance is quite enough to make a patriot. They sent me to Paris on a secret mission, and when I returned, my friends were in prison. Being always of a free disposition, I did not envy them their situation : accordingly returned to England. Halting at Liverpool, with a most debilitated purse, I went into a silversmith's shop to brace it, and about six months afterwards, I found myself on a marine excursion to Botany Bay. On my return from that country, I resolved to turn my literary talents to account. I went to Cambridge, wrote declamations, and translated Virgil at so much a sheet. My relations (thanks to my letters, neither few nor far between) soon found me out ; they allowed me (they do so still) half a guinea a week ; and upon this and my declamations I manage to exist.

Ever since, my chief residence has been at Cambridge. I am an universal favourite with both graduates and under-graduates. I have reformed my life and my manners, and have become the quiet, orderly person you behold me. Age tames the fiercest of us—

“ ‘Non sum qualis eram.’ ”

“ Betty, bring me my purl, and be d—d to you.

“ It is now vacation time, and I have come to town with the idea of holding lectures on the state of education. Mr. Dartmore, your health. Gentlemen, yours. My story is done, —and I hope you will pay for the purl.” *

CHAPTER LI.

I hate a drunken rogue.—*Twelfth Night.*

WE took an affectionate leave of Mr. Gordon, and found ourselves once more in the open air: the smoke and the purl had contributed greatly to the continuance of our inebriety, and we were as much averse to bed as ever. We conveyed ourselves, laughing and rioting all the way, to a stand of hackney-coaches. We entered the head of the flock, and drove to Piccadilly. It set us down at the corner of the Haymarket.

“ Past two!” cried the watchman, as we sauntered by him.

“ You lie, you rascal,” said I, “ you have passed *three* now.”

We were all merry enough to laugh at this sally; and seeing a light gleam from the entrance of the Royal Saloon, we knocked at the door, and it was opened unto us. We sat down at the only spare table in the place, and looked round at the smug and *varemint* citizens with whom the room was filled.

“ Hollo, waiter!” cried Tringle, “ some red wine negus—I know not why it is, but the devil himself could never cure me of thirst. Wine and I have a most chemical attraction for each other. You know that we always estimate the force of attraction between bodies by the force required to separate them.”

While we were all three as noisy and nonsensical as our best friends could have wished us, a new stranger entered, approached, looked round the room for a seat, and seeing none, walked leisurely up to our table, and accosted me with a—“ Ha! Mr. Pelham, how d’ye do? Well met; by your leave I will sip my grog at your table. No offence I hope—more the merrier, eh?—Waiter, a glass of hot brandy and water—not too weak. D’ye hear?”

* Poor Jemmy Gordon—thou art no more! The stones of Cambridge no longer prate of thy whereabouts!—Death hath removed thee;—may it *not* be to that bourne where alone thy oaths can be outdone! He was indeed a singular character, that Jemmy Gordon, as many a generation of Cantabs can attest!—His long stick and his cocked hat—and his tattered Lucretius, and his mighty eye-glass, how familiarly do they intermingle with our recollections of Trinity and of Trumpington Streets! If I have rightly heard, his death was the consequence of a fractured limb. Laid by the leg in a lofty attic, his spirit was not tamed;—the noises he made were astounding to the last.—The grim foe carried him off in a whirlwind of slang! I do not say ‘Peace to his manes,’ for quiet would be the worst hell that could await him;—and heaven itself would be torture to Jemmy Gordon, if he were not allowed to swear in it!—Noisiest of reprobates, fare thee well!—H. P.

Need I say that this pithy and pretty address proceeded from the mouth of Mr. Tom Thornton? He was somewhat more than half drunk, and his light prying eyes twinkled dizzily in his head. Dartmore, who was, and is, the best natured fellow alive, hailed the signs of his intoxication as a sort of freemasonry, and made way for him beside himself. I could not help remarking, that Thornton seemed singularly less sleek than heretofore: his coat was out at the elbows, his linen was torn and soiled; there was not a vestige of the vulgar spruceeness about him which was formerly one of his most prominent characteristics. He had also lost a great deal of the florid health for-

merly visible in his face: his cheeks seemed sunk and haggard, his eyes hollow, and his complexion sallow and squalid, in spite of the flush which intemperance spread over it at the moment. However, he was in high spirits, and soon made himself so entertaining that Dartmore and Tringle grew charmed with him.

As for me, the antipathy I had to the man sobered and silenced me for the rest of the night; and finding that Dartmore and his friend were eager for an introduction to some female friends of Thornton's, whom he mentioned in terms of high praise, I tore myself from them, and made the best of my way home.

CHAPTER LII.

*Illi mors gravis incubat
Qui, notus nimis omnibus,
Ignotus moritur sibi.—SENECA.*

Nous serons par nos lois les juges des ouvrages.—Les Femmes Savantes.

Whilst we do speak, our fire
Doth into ice expire;
Flames turn to frost,
And, ere we can
Know how our crow turns swan,
Or how a silver snow
Springs there, where jet did grow,
Our fading spring is in dull winter lost.—JASPAR MAYNE

VINCENT called on me the next day. "I have news for you," said he, "though somewhat of a lugubrious nature. *Lugete Veneres Cupidines-que!* You remember the Duchesse de Perpignan?"

"I should think so," was my answer.

"Well, then," pursued Vincent, "she is no more. Her death was worthy of her life. She was to give a brilliant entertainment to all the foreigners at Paris: the day before it took place, a dreadful eruption broke out on her complexion. She sent for the doctors

in despair. 'Cure me against to-morrow,' she said, 'and name your own reward.' 'Madame, it is impossible to do so with safety to your health.' '*Au diable* with your health!' said the Duchesse; 'what is health to an eruption?' The doctors took the hint; an external application was used—the Duchesse woke in the morning as beautiful as ever—the entertainment took place—she was the Armida of the scene. Supper was announced. She took the arm of the — ambassador, and moved through the crowd

amidst the audible admiration of all. She stopped for a moment at the door; all eyes were upon her. A fearful and ghastly convulsion passed over her countenance, her lips trembled, she fell on the ground with the most terrible contortions of face and frame. They carried her to bed. She remained for some days insensible; when she recovered, she asked for a looking-glass. Her whole face was drawn on one side; not a wreck of beauty was left;—that night she poisoned herself!"

I cannot express how shocked I was at this information. Much as I had cause to be disgusted with the conduct of that unhappy woman, I could find in my mind no feeling but commiseration and horror at her death; and it was with great difficulty that Vincent persuaded me to accept an invitation to Lady Roseville's for the evening, to meet Glanville and himself.

However, I cheered up as the night came on; and though my mind was still haunted with the tale of the morning, it was neither in a musing nor a melancholy mood that I entered the drawing-room at Lady Roseville's—"So runs the world away!"

Glanville was there in his customary mourning.

"Pelham," he said, when he joined me, "do you remember at Lady——'s one night, I said I would introduce you to my sister? I had no opportunity then, for we left the house before she returned from the refreshment room. May I do so now?"

I need not say what was my answer. I followed Glanville into the next room; and, to my inexpressible astonishment and delight, discovered in his sister the beautiful, the never-forgotten stranger I had seen at Cheltenham.

For once in my life I was embarrassed—my bow would have shamed a major in the line, and my stammered and irrelevant address an alderman in the presence of His Majesty. How-

ever, a few moments sufficed to recover me, and I strained every nerve to be as agreeable as possible.

After I had conversed with Miss Glanville for some time, Lady Roseville joined us. Stately and Juno-like as was that charming personage in general, she relaxed into a softness of manner to Miss Glanville, that quite won my heart. She drew her to a part of the room, where a very animated and chiefly literary conversation was going on—and I, resolving to make the best of my time, followed them, and once more found myself seated beside Miss Glanville. Lady Roseville was on the other side of my beautiful companion; and I observed that, whenever she took her eyes from Miss Glanville, they always rested upon her brother, who, in the midst of the disputation and the disputants, sat silent, gloomy, and absorbed.

The conversation turned upon Scott's novels; thence on novels in general; and finally on the particular one of Anastasius.

"It is a thousand pities," said Vincent, "that the scene of that novel is so far removed from us. But it is a great misfortune for Hope that—

'To learning he narrowed his mind,
And gave up to the East what was meant
for mankind.'

One often loses, in admiration at the knowledge of peculiar costume, the deference one would have paid to the masterly grasp of universal character."

"It must require," said Lady Roseville, "an extraordinary combination of mental powers to produce a perfect novel."

"One so extraordinary," answered Vincent, "that, though we have one perfect epic poem, and several which pretend to perfection, we have not one perfect novel in the world.* Gil Blas

* For Don Quixote is not what Lord Vincent terms a *novel*, viz. the actual representation of real life

approaches more to perfection than any other; but it must be confessed that there is a want of dignity, of moral rectitude, and of what I may term moral beauty, throughout the whole book. If an author could combine the various excellencies of Scott and Le Sage, with a greater and more metaphysical knowledge of morals than either, we might expect from him the perfection we have not yet discovered since the days of Apuleius."

"Speaking of morals," said Lady Roseville, "do you not think every novel should have its distinct object, and inculcate, throughout, some one peculiar moral, such as many of Marmonet's and Miss Edgeworth's?"

"No!" answered Vincent, "every good novel has one great end—the same in all—viz. the increasing our knowledge of the heart. It is thus that a novel writer must be a philosopher. Whoever succeeds in showing us more accurately the nature of ourselves and species, has done science, and, consequently, virtue, the most important benefit; *for every truth is a moral.* This great and universal end, I am led to imagine, is rather crippled than extended by the rigorous attention to the one isolated moral you mention.

"Thus Dryden, in his Essay on the Progress of Satire, very rightly prefers Horace to Juvenal, so far as instruction is concerned; because the miscellaneous satires of the former are directed against every vice—the more confined ones of the latter (for the most part) only against one. All mankind is the field the novelist should cultivate—all truth, the moral he should strive to bring home. It is in occasional dialogue, in desultory maxims, in deductions from events, in analysis of character, that he should benefit and instruct. It is not enough—and I wish a certain novelist who has lately arisen would remember this—it is not enough for a writer to have a good heart, amiable

sympathies, and what are termed high feelings, in order to shape out a moral, either true in itself, or beneficial in its inculcation. Before he touches his tale, he should be thoroughly acquainted with the intricate science of morals, and the metaphysical, as well as the more open, operations of the mind. If his knowledge is not deep and clear, his love of the good may only lead him into error; and he may pass off the prejudices of a susceptible heart for the precepts of virtue. Would to Heaven that people would think it necessary to be instructed before they attempt to instruct! '*Dire simplement que la vertu est vertu parce qu'elle est bonne en son fonds, et le vice tout au contraire, ce n'est pas les faire connoître.*' For me, if I were to write a novel, I would first make myself an acute, active, and vigilant observer of men and manners. Secondly, I would, after having thus noted effects by action in the world, trace the causes by books, and meditation in my closet. It is then, and not till then, that I would study the lighter graces of style and decoration; nor would I give the rein to invention, till I was convinced that it would create neither monsters, of men, nor falsities, of truth. For my vehicles of instruction or amusement, I would have people as they are—neither worse nor better—and the moral they should convey, should be rather through jest or irony, than gravity and seriousness. There never was an imperfection corrected by portraying perfection; and if levity and ridicule be said so easily to allure to sin, I do not see why they should not be used in defence of virtue. Of this we may be sure, that as laughter is a distinct indication of the human race, so there never was a brute mind or a savage heart that loved to indulge in it."*

* The Sage of Malmesbury expresses a

Vincent ceased.

"Thank you, my lord," said Lady Roseville, as she took Miss Glanville's arm and moved from the table. "For once you have condescended to give

us your own sense, and not other people's; you have scarce made a single quotation."

"Accept," answered Vincent rising,

"Accept a miracle instead of wit."

CHAPTER LIII.

Oh! I love!—Methinks

This word of love is fit for all the world,
And that, for gentle hearts, another name

Should speak of gentler thoughts than the world owns.— B. SHELLEY.

—For me, I ask no more than honour gives,

To think me yours, and rank me with your friends.—SHAKESPEARE.

✓ CALLOUS and worldly as I may seem, from the tone of these memoirs, I can say, safely, that one of the most delicious evenings I ever spent, was the first of my introduction to Miss Glanville. I went home intoxicated with a subtle spirit of enjoyment that gave a new zest and freshness to life. Two little hours seemed to have changed the whole course of my thoughts and feelings.

There was nothing about Miss Glanville like a heroine—I hate your heroines. She had none of that "modest ease," and "quiet dignity," of which certain writers speak with such applause. Thank Heaven, *she was alive!* She had great sense, but the playfulness of a child; extreme rectitude of mind, but with the tenderness of a gazelle: if she laughed, all her countenance, lips, eyes, forehead, cheeks, laughed too: "Paradise seemed opened in her face:" if she looked grave, it was such a lofty and *upward*, yet sweet and gentle gravity, that you might (had you

been gifted with the least imagination) have supposed, from the model of her countenance, a new order of angels between the cherubim and the seraphim, the angels of Love and Wisdom. She was not, perhaps, quite so silent in society as my individual taste would desire; but when she spoke, it was with a propriety of thought and diction which made me lament when her voice had ceased. It was as if something beautiful in creation had stopped suddenly.

Enough of this now. I was lazily turning (the morning after Lady Roseville's) over some old books, when Vincent entered. I observed that his face was flushed, and his eyes sparkled with more than their usual brilliancy. He looked carefully round the room, and then, approaching his chair towards mine, said, in a low tone—

"Pelham, I have something of importance on my mind which I wish to discuss with you; but let me entreat you to lay aside your usual levity, and pardon me if I say affectation; meet me with the candour and plainness which are the real distinctions of your character."

"My Lord Vincent," I replied, "there are, in your words, a depth

very different opinion of the philosophy of laughter, and, for my part, I think his doctrine, in great measure, though not altogether—true. See *Hobbes on Human Nature*, and the answer to him in *Campbell's Rhetoric*.—AUTHOR

and solemnity which pierce me, through one of N——'s best stuffed coats, even to the very heart. I will hear you as you desire, from the alpha to the omega of your discourse."

"My dear friend," said Vincent, "I have often seen that, in spite of all your love of pleasure, you have your mind continually turned towards higher and graver objects; and I have thought the better of your talents, and of your future success, for the little parade you make of the one, and the little care you appear to pay to the other: for

'tis a common proof,

That lowliness is young Ambition's ladder."

I have also observed that you have, of late, been much to Lord Dawton's; I have even heard that you have been twice closeted with him. It is well known that that person entertains hopes of leading the opposition to the *grata arva* of the Treasury benches; and notwithstanding the years in which the Whigs have been out of office, there are some persons who pretend to foresee the chance of a coalition between them and Mr. Gaskell, to whose principles it is also added that they have been gradually assimilating."

Here Vincent paused a moment, and looked full at me. I met his eye with a glance as searching as his own. His look changed, and he continued.

"Now listen to me, Pelham: such a coalition never can take place. You smile: I repeat it. It is my object to form a third party; perhaps, while the two great sects 'anticipate the cabinet designs of fate,' there may suddenly come by a third, 'to whom the whole shall be referred.' Say that you think it not impossible that you may join us, and I will tell you more."

I paused for three minutes before I answered Vincent. I then said—"I thank you very sincerely for your pro-

posal: tell me the names of two of your designed party, and I will answer you."

"Lord Lincoln and Lord Lesborough."

"What!" said I—"the Whig, who says in the Upper House, that whatever may be the distresses of the people, they shall not be gratified at the cost of one of the despotic privileges of the aristocracy. Go to!—I will have none of him. As to Lesborough, he is a fool and a boaster—who is always puffing his own vanity with the windiest pair of oratorical bellows that ever were made by air and brass, for the purpose of sound and smoke, 'signifying nothing.' Go to!—I will have none of him either."

"You are right in your judgment of my *confrères*," answered Vincent; "but we must make use of bad tools for good purposes."

"No—no!" said I; "the commonest carpenter will tell you the reverse."

Vincent eyed me suspiciously. "Look you!" said he: "I know well that no man loves, better than you, place, power, and reputation. Do you grant this?"

"I do," was my reply.

"Join with us; I will place you in the House of Commons immediately; if we succeed, you shall have the first and the best post I can give you. Now—'under which king, Bezonian, speak or die!'"

"I answer you in the words of the same worthy you quote," said I—"A foutra for thine office."—Do you know, Vincent, that I have, strange as it may seem to you, such a thing as a conscience? It is true I forget it now and then; but in a public capacity, the recollection of others would put me very soon in mind of it. I know your party well. I cannot imagine—forgive me—one more injurious to the country, nor one more revolting to myself; and I do positively affirm,

that I would sooner feed my poodle on paunch and liver, instead of cream and fricassee, than be an instrument in the hands of men like Lincoln and Lesborough ; who talk much, who perform nothing—who join ignorance of every principle of legislation to indifference for every benefit to the people :—who are full of ‘ wise saws,’ but empty of ‘ modern instances’—who level upwards, and trample downwards—and would only value the ability you are pleased to impute to me, in the exact proportion that a sportsman values the ferret, that burrows for his pleasure, and destroys for his interest. Your *party* can’t stand?”

Vincent turned pale—“ And how long,” said he, “ have you learnt ‘ the principles of legislation,’ and this mighty affection for the ‘ benefit of the people?’ ”

“ Ever since,” said I, coldly, “ I learnt *any* thing ! The first piece of *real* knowledge I ever gained was, that my interest was incorporated with that of the beings with whom I had the chance of being cast : if I injure them, I injure myself : if I can do them any good, I receive the benefit in common with the rest. Now, as I have a great love for that personage who has now the honour of addressing you, I resolved to be honest for his sake. So much for my affection for the benefit of the people. As to the little knowledge of the principles of legislation, on which you are kind enough to compliment me, look over the books on this table, or the writings in this desk, and know, that ever since I had the misfortune of parting from you at Cheltenham, there has not been a day in which I have spent less than six hours reading and writing on that sole subject. But enough of this—will you ride to-day ?”

Vincent rose slowly—

“ ‘ Gli arditi (said he) tuoi voti
Già noti mi sono ;
Ma invano a quel trono,
Tu aspiri con me :
Tremate per te !’ ”

“ ‘ *Io tremo*’ (I replied out of the same opera)—‘ *Io tremo—di te !*’ ”

“ Well,” answered Vincent, and his fine high nature overcame his momentary resentment and chagrin at my rejection of his offer—“ Well, I honour you for your sentiments, though they are opposed to my own. I may depend on your secrecy ?”

“ You may,” said I.

“ I forgive you, Pelham,” rejoined Vincent : “ we part friends.”

“ Wait one moment,” said I, “ and pardon me, if I venture to speak in the language of caution to one in every way so superior to myself. No one (I say this with a safe conscience, for I never flattered my friend in my life, though I have often adulated my enemy)—no one has a greater admiration for your talents than myself ; I desire eagerly to see you in the station most fit for their display ; pause one moment before you link yourself, not only to a party, but to principles that cannot stand. You have only to exert yourself, and you may either lead the opposition, or be among the foremost in the administration. Take something certain, rather than what is doubtful : or at least stand alone :—such is my belief in your powers, if fairly tried, that if you were not united to those men, I would promise you faithfully to stand or fall by you alone, even if we had not through all England another soldier to our standard ; but —”

“ I thank you, Pelham,” said Vincent, interrupting me : “ till we meet in public as enemies, we are friends in private—I desire no more. Farewell.”

CHAPTER LIV.

Il vaut mieux employer notre esprit à supporter les infortunes qui nous arrivent, qu'à prévoir celles qui nous peuvent arriver.—ROCHEFOUCAULT.

No sooner had Vincent departed than I buttoned my coat, and sallied out through a cold easterly wind to Lord Dawton's. It was truly said by the political quoter, that I had been often to that nobleman's, although I have not thought it advisable to speak of my political adventures hitherto. I have before said that I was ambitious; and the sagacious have probably already discovered, that I was somewhat less ignorant than it was my usual pride and pleasure to appear. I had established, among my uncle's friends, a reputation for talent; and no sooner had I been personally introduced to Lord Dawton, than I found myself courted by that personage in a manner equally gratifying and uncommon. When I lost my seat in Parliament, Dawton assured me that, before the session was over, I should be returned for one of his boroughs; and though my mind revolted at the idea of becoming *dependant* on any party, I made little scruple of promising *conditionally* to ally myself to his. So far had affairs gone, when I was honoured with Vincent's proposal. I found Lord Dawton in his library, with the Marquis of Clandonald (Lord Dartmore's father, and, from his rank and property, classed among the highest, as, from his vanity and restlessness, he was among the most active, members of the Opposition). Clandonald left the room when I entered. Few men in office are wise enough to trust the young; as if the greater zeal and sincerity of youth did not more than compensate for its appetite

for the gay or its thoughtlessness of the serious.

When we were alone, Dawton said to me, "We are in great despair at the motion upon the ———, to be made in the Lower House. We have not a single person whom we can depend upon, for the sweeping and convincing answer we ought to make; and though we should at least muster our full force in voting, our whipper-in, poor ———, is so ill, that I fear we shall make but a very pitiful figure."

"Give me," said I, "full permission to go forth into the high-ways and by-ways, and I will engage to bring a whole legion of dandies to the House door. I can go no farther; your other agents must do the rest."

"Thank you, my dear young friend," said Lord Dawton, eagerly: "thank you a thousand times: we must really get you in the House as soon as possible; you will serve us more than I can express."

I bowed, with a sneer I could not repress. Dawton pretended not to observe it. "Come," said I, "my lord, we have no time to lose. I shall meet you, perhaps, at Brookes's, to-morrow evening, and report to you respecting my success."

Lord Dawton pressed my hand warmly, and followed me to the door.

"He is the best premier we could have," thought I; "but he deceives himself, if he thinks Henry Pelham will play the jackall to his lion. He will soon see that I shall keep for myself what he thinks I hunt for him." I passed through Pall Mall,

and thought of Glanville. I knocked at his door: he was at home. I found him leaning his cheek upon his hand, in a thoughtful position; an open letter was before him.

"Read that," he said, pointing to it.

I did so. It was from the agent to the Duke of ———, and contained his nomination to an opposition borough.

"A new toy, Pelham," said he, faintly smiling; "but a little longer, and they will all be broken—the *rattle* will be the last."

"My dear, dear Glanville," said I, much affected, "do not talk thus; you have every thing before you."

"Yes," interrupted Glanville, "you are right, for every thing left for me is in the grave. Do you imagine that I can taste one of the possessions which fortune has heaped upon me; that I have one healthful faculty, one sense of enjoyment, among the hundred which other men are 'heirs to?' When did you ever see me for a moment happy? I live, as it were, on a rock, barren, and herbless, and sapless, and cut off from all human fellowship and intercourse. I had only a single object left to live for, when you saw me at Paris; I have gratified that, and the end and purpose of my existence is fulfilled. Heaven is merciful; but a little while, and this feverish and unquiet spirit shall be at rest."

I took his hand and pressed it.

"Feel," said he, "this dry, burning skin; count my pulse through the variations of a single minute, and you will cease either to pity me, or to speak to me of life. For months I have had, night and day, a wasting—wasting fever, of brain and heart, and frame; the fire works well, and the fuel is nearly consumed."

He paused, and we were both silent. In fact, I was shocked at the fever of his pulse, no less than affected at the despondency of his words. At last I spoke to him of medical advice.

"'Canst thou,' he said, with a deep solemnity of voice and manner, "'administer to a mind diseased—pluck from the memory'**** Ah! away with the quotation and the reflection." And he sprang from the sofa, and, going to the window, opened it, and leaned out for a few moments in silence. When he turned again towards me, his manner had regained its usual quiet. He spoke about the important motion approaching on the —, and promised to attend; and then, by degrees, I led him to talk of his sister.

He mentioned her with enthusiasm. "Beautiful as Ellen is," he said, "her face is the very faintest reflection of her mind. Her habits of thought are so pure that every impulse is a virtue. Never was there a person to whom goodness was so easy. Vice seems something so opposite to her nature, that I cannot imagine it possible for her to sin."

"Will you not call with me at your mother's?" said I. "I am going there to-day."

Glanville replied in the affirmative, and we went at once to Lady Glanville's in Berkeley-square. We were admitted into his mother's *boudoir*. She was alone with Miss Glanville. Our conversation soon turned from common-place topics to those of a graver nature; the deep melancholy of Glanville's mind imbued all his thoughts, when he once suffered himself to express them.

"Why," said Lady Glanville, who seemed painfully fond of her son, "why do you not go more into the world? You suffer your mind to prey upon itself, till it destroys you. My dear, dear son, how very ill you seem!"

Ellen, whose eyes swam in tears, as they gazed upon her brother, laid her beautiful hand upon his, and said, "For my mother's sake, Reginald, do take more care of yourself: you want air, and exercise, and amusement."

"No," answered Glanville. "I want nothing but occupation; and, thanks to the Duke of —, I have now got it. I am chosen member for —."

"I am *too* happy," said the proud mother; "you will now be all I have ever predicted for you;" and, in her joy at the moment, she forgot the hectic of his cheek, and the hollowness of his eye.

"Do you remember," said Reginald, turning to his sister, "those beautiful lines in my favourite Ford—

* Glories

*Of human greatness are but pleasing dreams,
And shadows soon decaying. On the stage
Of my mortality, my youth has acted
Some scenes of vanity, drawn out at length
By varied pleasures—sweetened in the
mixture.*

*But tragical in issue. Beauty, pomp,
With every sensuality our giddiness
Doth frame an idol—are inconstant friends
When any troubled passion makes us halt
On the unguarded castle of the mind."*

"Your verses," said I, "are beautiful, even to me, who have no soul for poetry, and never wrote a line in my life. But I love not their philosophy. In all sentiments that are impregnated with melancholy, and instil sadness as a moral, I question the wisdom, and dispute the truth. There is no situation in life which we cannot sweeten, or embitter, at will. If the past is gloomy, I do not see the necessity of dwelling upon it. If the mind can make one vigorous exertion, it can another: the same energy you put forth in acquiring knowledge, would also enable you to baffle misfortune. Determine not to think upon what is painful; resolutely turn away from every thing that recalls it; bend all your attention to some new and engrossing object; do this, and you defeat the past. You smile, as if this were impossible; yet it is not an iota more so, than to tear one's self from a favourite pursuit, and addict one's self to an object unwelcome to one at first. This the

mind does continually through life: so can it also do the other, if you will but make an equal exertion. Nor does it seem to me natural to the human heart to look *much* to the past; all its plans, its projects, its aspirations, are for the future; it is *for* the future, and *in* the future, that we live. Our very passions, when most agitated, are most anticipative. Revenge, avarice, ambition, love, the desire of good and evil, are all fixed and pointed to some distant goal; to look backwards, is like walking backwards—against our proper formation: the mind does not readily adopt the habit, and when once adopted, it will readily return to its natural bias. Oblivion is, therefore, a more easily obtained boon than we imagine. Forgetfulness of the past is purchased by increasing our anxiety for the future."

I paused for a moment, but Glanville did not answer me; and, encouraged by a look from Ellen, I continued—"You remember that according to an old creed, if we were given memory as a curse, we were also given hope as a blessing. Counteract the one by the other. In my own life, I have committed many weak, perhaps many wicked actions; I have chased away their remembrance, though I have transplanted their warning to the future. As the body involuntarily avoids what is hurtful to it, without tracing the association to its first experience, so the mind insensibly shuns what has formerly afflicted it, even without palpably recalling the remembrance of the affliction.

"The Roman philosopher placed the secret of human happiness in the one maxim—'not to admire.' I never could exactly comprehend the sense of the moral: my maxim for the same object would be—'never to regret.'"

"Alas! my dear friend," said Glanville—"we are great philosophers to each other, but not to ourselves; the

moment we begin to *feel* sorrow, we cease to reflect on its wisdom. Time is the only comforter ; your maxims are very true, but they confirm me in my opinion—that it is in vain for us to lay down fixed precepts for the regulation of the mind, so long as it is dependent upon the body. Happiness and its reverse are constitutional in many persons, and it is then only that they are independent of circumstances. Make the health, the frames of all men, alike—make their nerves of the same susceptibility—their memories of the same bluntness, or

acuteness—and I will then allow that you can give rules adapted to all men; till then, your maxim, ‘never to regret,’ is as idle as Horace’s ‘never to admire.’ It may be wise to you—it is impossible to me !”

With these last words, Glanville’s voice faltered, and I felt averse to push the argument further. Ellen’s eye caught mine, and gave me a look so kind, and almost grateful, that I forgot every thing else in the world. A few moments afterwards a friend of Lady Glanville’s was announced, and I left the room.

CHAPTER LV.

— Intus, et in Jecore agro,
Nascuntur domini — PERSIUS.

THE next two or three days I spent in visiting all my male friends in the Lower House, and engaging them to dine with me, preparatorily to the great act of voting on ——’s motion. I led them myself to the House of Commons, and not feeling sufficiently interested in the debate to remain, as a stranger, where I ought, in my own opinion, to have acted as a performer, I went to Brookes’s to wait the result. Lord Gravelton, a stout, bluff, six-foot nobleman, with a voice like a Stentor, was “blowing up” the waiters in the coffee-room. Mr. ——, the author of ——, was conning the *Courier* in a corner; and Lord Armadilleros, the haughtiest and most honourable peer in the calendar, was monopolising the drawing-room, with his right foot on one hob and his left on the other. I sat myself down in silence, and looked over the “crack article” in the *Edinburgh*. By and by, the room got fuller; every one spoke of the motion before the House, and anticipated

the merits of the speeches, and the numbers of the voters.

At last a principal member entered—a crowd gathered round him. “I have heard,” he said, “the most extraordinary speech, for the combination of knowledge and imagination, that I ever recollect to have listened to.”

“From Gaskell, I suppose?” was the universal cry.

“No,” said Mr. ——, “Gaskell has not yet spoken. It was from a young man who has only just taken his seat. It was received with the most unanimous cheers, and was, indeed, a remarkable display.”

“What is his name?” I asked, already half foreboding the answer.

“I only just learnt it as I left the House,” replied Mr. ——; “the speaker was Sir Reginald Glanville.”

Then, every one of those whom I had often before heard censure Glanville for his rudeness, or laugh at him for his eccentricity, opened their

moult's in congratulations to their own wisdom, for having long admired his talents and predicted his success.

I left the "*turba Remi sequens fortunam*;" I felt agitated and feverish; those who have unexpectedly heard of the success of a man for whom great affection is blended with greater interest, can understand the restlessness of mind with which I wandered into the streets. The air was cold and nipping. I was buttoning my coat round my chest, when I heard a voice say, "You have dropped your glove, Mr. Pelham."

The speaker was Thornton. I thanked him coldly for his civility, and was going on, when he said, "If your way is up Pall Mall, I have no objection to join you for a few minutes."

I bowed with some *hauteur*; but as I seldom refuse any opportunity of knowing more perfectly individual character, I said I should be happy of his company so long as our way lay together.

"It is a cold night, Mr. Pelham," said Thornton, after a pause. "I have been dining at Hatchett's, with an old Paris acquaintance: I am sorry we did not meet more often in France, but I was so taken up with my friend Mr. Warburton."

As Thornton uttered that name, he looked hard at me, and then added, "By the by, I saw you with Sir Reginald Glanville the other day; you know him well, I presume?"

"Tolerably well," said I, with indifference.

"What a strange character he is," rejoined Thornton; "I also have known him for some years," and again Thornton looked pryingly into my countenance. Poor fool! it was not for a penetration like his to read the *cor inscrutabile* of a man born and bred like me, in the consummate dissimulation of *bon ton*.

"He is very rich, is he not?" said Thornton, after a brief silence.

"I believe so," said I.

"Humph!" answered Thornton. "Things have grown better with him, in proportion as they grew worse with me, who have had 'as good luck as the cow that stuck herself with her own horn.' I suppose he is not too anxious to recollect me—'poverty parts fellowship.' Well, hang pride, say I; give me an honest heart all the year round, in summer or winter, drought or plenty. Would to heaven some kind friend would lend me twenty pounds!"

To this wish I made no reply. Thornton sighed.

"Mr. Pelham," renewed he, "it is true I have known you but a short time—excuse the liberty I take—but if you *could* lend me a trifle, it would really assist me very much."

"Mr. Thornton," said I, "if I knew you better, and could serve you more, you might apply to me for a more real assistance than any *bagatelle* I could afford you would be. If twenty pounds would really be of service to you, I will lend them to you, upon this condition, that you never ask me for another farthing."

Thornton's face brightened. "A thousand, thousand—" he began.

"No," interrupted I, "no thanks, only your promise."

"Upon my honour," said Thornton, "I will never ask you for another farthing."

"There is honour among thieves," thought I, and so I took out the sum mentioned, and gave it to him. In good earnest, though I disliked the man, his threadbare garments and altered appearance moved me to compassion. While he was pocketing the money, which he did with the most unequivocal delight, a tall figure passed us rapidly. We both turned at the same instant, and recognised Glanville. He had not gone seven

yards beyond us, before we observed his steps, which were very irregular, pause suddenly; a moment afterwards he fell against the iron rails of an area; we hastened towards him; he was apparently fainting. His countenance was perfectly livid, and marked with the traces of extreme exhaustion. I sent Thornton to the nearest public-house for some water; before he returned, Glanville had recovered.

"All—all—in vain," he said, slowly and unconsciously, "death is the only lethe."

He started when he saw me. I made him lean on my arm, and we walked on slowly.

"I have already heard of your speech," said I. Glanville smiled with the usual faint and sicklied expression, which made his smile painful even in its exceedingsweetness.

"You have also already seen its effects; the excitement was too much for me."

"It must have been a proud moment when you sat down," said I.

"It was one of the bitterest I ever felt—it was fraught with the memory of the dead. What are all honours to me now!—O God! O God! have mercy upon me!"

And Glanville stopped suddenly, and put his hand to his temples.

By this time Thornton had joined us. When Glanville's eyes rested upon him, a deep hectic rose slowly and gradually over his cheeks. Thornton's lip curled with a malicious expression. Glanville marked it, and his brow grew on the moment as black as night.

"Begone!" he said, in a loud voice, and with a flashing eye, "begone instantly; I loathe the very sight of so base a thing."

Thornton's quick, restless eye, grew like a living coal, and he bit his lip so violently that the blood gushed out. He made, however, no other answer than—

"You seem agitated to-night, Sir Reginald; I wish your speedy restoration to better health. Mr. Pelham, your servant."

Glanville walked on in silence till we came to his door; we parted there; and for want of any thing better to do, I sauntered towards the M—— Hell. There were only about ten or twelve persons in the rooms, and all were gathered round the hazard table—I looked on silently, seeing the knaves devour the fools, and younger brothers make up in wit for the deficiencies of fortune.

The Honourable Mr. Blaggrave came up to me; "Do you never play?" said he.

"Sometimes," was my brief reply.

"Lend me a hundred pounds!" rejoined my kind acquaintance.

"I was just going to make you the same request," said I.

Blaggrave laughed heartily. "Well," said he, "be my security to a Jew, and I'll be yours. My fellow lends me money at only forty per cent. My governor is a d——d stingy old fellow, for I am the most moderate son in the universe. I neither hunt nor race, nor have I any one favourite expense, except gambling, and he won't satisfy me in that—now I call such conduct shameful!"

"Unheard-of barbarity," said I; "and you do well to ruin your property by Jews, before you have it; you could not avenge yourself better on 'the governor.'"

"No, hang it," said Blaggrave, "leave me alone for that! Well, I have got five pounds left, I shall go and slap it down."

No sooner had he left me than I was accosted by Mr. —, a handsome adventurer, who lived the devil knew how, for the devil seemed to take excellent care of him.

"Poor Blaggrave!" said he, eyeing the countenance of that ingenious youth. "He is a strange fellow—he

asked me the other day, if I ever read the History of England, and told me there was a great deal in it about his ancestor, a Roman General, in the time of William the Conqueror, called Caractacus. He told me at the last Newmarket, that he had made up a capital book, and it turned out that he had hedged with such dexterity, that he *must* lose one thousand pounds, and he *might* lose two. Well, well," continued —, with a sanctified expression; "I would sooner see those real fools here, than the confounded scoundrels, who pillage one under a false appearance. Never, Mr. Pelham, trust to a man at a gaming-house; the honestest look hides the worst sharper! Shall you try your luck to-night?"

"No," said I. "I shall only look on."

— sauntered to the table, and sat down next to a rich young man, of the best temper and the worst luck in the world. After a few throws, — said to him, "Lord —, do put your money aside—you have so much on the table, that it interferes with mine—and that is really so unpleasant. Suppose you put some of it in your pocket."

Lord — took a handful of notes, and stuffed them carelessly in his coat pocket. Five minutes afterwards I saw — insert his hand, *empty*, in his neighbour's pocket, and bring it out *full*—and half an hour afterwards he handed over a fifty pound note to the marker, saying, "There, sir, is my debt to you. God bless me, Lord —, how you *have* won; I wish you would not leave all your money about—do put it in your pocket with the rest."

Lord — (who had perceived the trick, though he was too indolent to resist it) laughed. "No, no, —," said he, "you must let me keep some!"

— coloured, and soon after rose. "D—n my luck!" said he, as he passed me. "I wonder I continue to play—but there are such sharpers in the room. Avoid a gaming house Mr. Pelham, if you wish to live."

"And *let* live," thought I.

I was just going away, when I heard a loud laugh on the stairs, and immediately afterwards Thornton entered, joking with one of the markers. He did not see me; but approaching the table, drew out the identical twenty pound note I had given him, and asked for change with the air of a *millionaire*. I did not wait to witness his fortune, good or ill; I cared too little about it. I descended the stairs, and the servant, on opening the door for me, admitted Sir John Tyrrell. "What," I thought, "is the habit *still* so strong?" We stopped each other, and after a few words of greeting, I went, once more, up stairs with him.

Thornton was playing as eagerly with his small quota as Lord C— with his ten thousands. He nodded with an affected air of familiarity to Tyrrell, who returned his salutation with the most supercilious hauteur; and very soon afterwards the baronet was utterly engrossed by the chances of the game. I had, however, satisfied my curiosity, in ascertaining that there was no longer any intimacy between him and Thornton, and accordingly once more I took my departure.

CHAPTER LVI.

————— The times have been
That when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end—but now they rise again.—*Macbeth.*

It was a strange thing to see a man like Glanville, with costly tastes, luxurious habits, great talents peculiarly calculated for display, courted by the highest members of the state, admired for his beauty and genius by half the women in London, yet living in the most ascetic seclusion from his kind, and indulging in the darkest and most morbid despondency. No female was ever seen to win even his momentary glance of admiration. All the senses appeared to have lost, for him, their customary allurements. He lived among his books, and seemed to make his favourite companions amidst the past. At nearly all hours of the night he was awake and occupied, and at day-break his horse was always brought to his door. He rode alone for several hours, and then, on his return, he was employed till the hour he went to the House, in the affairs and politics of the day. Ever since his *début*, he had entered with much constancy into the more leading debates, and his speeches were invariably of the same commanding order which had characterised his first.

It was singular that, in his parliamentary display, as in his ordinary conversation, there were none of the wild and speculative opinions, or the burning enthusiasm of romance, in which the natural inclination of his mind seemed so essentially to delight. His arguments were always remarkable for the soundness of the principles on which they were based, and the logical clearness with which they were expressed. The feverish fervour

of his temperament was, it is true, occasionally shown in a remarkable energy of delivery, or a sudden and unexpected burst of the more impetuous powers of oratory: but these were so evidently natural and spontaneous, and so happily adapted to be impressive of the subject, rather than irrelevant from its bearings, that they never displeased even the oldest and coldest cynics and calculators of the House.

It is no uncommon contradiction in human nature (and in Glanville it seemed peculiarly prominent) to find men of imagination and genius gifted with the strongest common sense, for the admonition or benefit of *others*, even while constantly neglecting to exert it for themselves. He was soon marked out as the most promising and important of all the junior members of the House: and the coldness with which he kept aloof from social intercourse with the party he adopted, only served to increase their respect, though it prevented their affection.

Lady Roseville's attachment to him was scarcely a secret; the celebrity of her name in the world of *ton* made her least look or action the constant subject of present remark and after conversation; and there were too many moments, even in the watchful publicity of society, when that charming but imprudent person forgot everything but the romance of her attachment. Glanville seemed not only perfectly untouched by it, but even wholly unconscious of its exist-

ence, and preserved invariably, whenever he was forced into the crowd, the same stern, cold, unsympathising reserve, which made him, at once, an object of universal conversation and dislike.

Three weeks after Glanville's first speech in the House, I called upon him, with a proposal from Lord Dawton. After we had discussed it, we spoke on more familiar topics, and, at last, he mentioned Thornton. It will be observed that we had never conversed respecting that person; nor had Glanville once alluded to our former meetings, or to his disguised appearance and false appellation at Paris. Whatever might be the mystery, it was evidently of a painful nature, and it was not, therefore, for me to allude to it. This day he spoke of Thornton with a tone of indifference.

"The man," he said, "I have known for some time; he was useful to me abroad, and, notwithstanding his character, I rewarded him well for his services. He has since applied to me several times for money, which is spent at the gambling-house as soon as it is obtained. I believe him to be eagued with a gang of sharpers of the lowest description; and I am really unwilling any farther to supply the vicious necessities of himself and his comrades. He is a mean, mercenary rascal, who would scruple at no enormity, provided he was paid for it."

Glanville paused for a few moments, and then added, while his cheek blushed, and his voice seemed somewhat hesitating and embarrassed—

"You remember Mr. Tyrrell, at Paris?"

"Yes," said I—"he is, at present, in London, and—" Glanville started as if he had been shot.

"No, no," he exclaimed wildly—"he died at Paris, from want,—from starvation."

"You are mistaken," said I; "he

is now Sir John Tyrrell, and possessed of considerable property. I saw him myself, three weeks ago."

Glanville, laying his hand upon my arm, looked in my face with a long, stern, prying gaze, and his cheek grew more ghastly and livid with every moment. At last he turned, and muttered something between his teeth; and at that moment the door opened, and Thornton was announced. Glanville sprang towards him, and seized him by the throat!

"Dog!" he cried, "you have deceived me—Tyrrell lives!"

"Hands off!" cried the gamester, with a savage grin of defiance—"hands off! or, by the Lord that made me, you shall have gripe for gripe!"

"Ho, wretch!" said Glanville, shaking him violently, while his worn and slender, yet still powerful frame, trembled with the excess of his passion; "dost thou dare to threaten me!" and with these words he flung Thornton against the opposite wall with such force, that the blood gushed out of his mouth and nostrils. The gambler rose slowly, and wiping the blood from his face, fixed his malignant and fiery eye upon his aggressor, with an expression of collected hate and vengeance, that made my very blood creep.

"It is *not* my day *now*," he said, with a calm, quiet, cold voice, and then, suddenly changing his manner, he approached me with a sort of bow, and made some remark on the weather.

Meanwhile, Glanville had sunk on the sofa exhausted, less by his late effort than the convulsive passion which had produced it. He rose in a few moments, and said to Thornton, "Pardon my violence; let this pay your bruises;" and he placed a long and apparently well-filled purse in Thornton's hand. That *redoubtable philosophe* took it with the same air

as a dog receives the first caress from the hand which has just chastised him ; and feeling the pulse between his short, hard fingers, as if to ascertain the soundness of its condition, quietly slid it into his breeches pocket, which he then buttoned with care, and pulling his waistcoat down, as if for further protection to the deposit, he turned towards Glanville, and said, in his usual quaint style of vulgarity—

“Least said, Sir Reginald, the soonest mended. Gold is a good plaister for bad bruises. Now, then, your will:—ask and I will answer, unless you think Mr. Pelham—*de trop*.”

I was already at the door, with the intention of leaving the room, when Glanville cried, “Stay, Pelham, I have but one question to ask Mr. Thornton. Is John Tyrrell still living?”

“He is!” answered Thornton, with a sardonic smile.

“And beyond all want?” resumed Glanville.

“He is!” was the tautological reply.

“Mr. Thornton,” said Glanville,

with a calm voice, “I have now done with you—you may leave the room!”

Thornton bowed with an air of ironical respect, and obeyed the command.

I turned to look at Glanville. His countenance, always better adapted to a stern, than a soft expression, was perfectly fearful: every line in it seemed dug into a furrow; the brows were bent over his large and flashing eyes with a painful intensity of anger and resolve, his teeth were clenched firmly as if by a vice, and the thin upper lip, which was drawn from them with a bitter curl of scorn, was as white as death. His right hand had closed upon the back of the chair, over which his tall nervous frame leant, and was grasping it with an iron force, which it could not support: it snapped beneath his hand like a hazel stick. This accident, slight as it was, recalled him to himself. He apologised with apparent self-possession for his disorder; and, after a few words of fervent and affectionate farewell on my part, I left him to the solitude which I knew he desired.

CHAPTER LVII.

While I seemed only intent upon pleasure, I locked in my heart the consciousness and vanity of power; in the levity of the lip, I disguised the knowledge and the workings of the brain; and I looked, as with a gifted eye, upon the mysteries of the hidden depths, while I seemed to float an idler with the herd only upon the surface of the stream.—
FALKLAND.

As I walked home, revolving the scene I had witnessed, the words of Tyrrell came into my recollection—viz. that the cause of Glanville's dislike to him had arisen in Tyrrell's greater success in some youthful *liaison*. In this account I could not see much probability. In the first place, the cause was not sufficient to produce such an effect; and, in the second, there was little likelihood that the young and rich Glanville, possessed of the most various accomplishments, and the most remarkable personal beauty, should be supplanted by a needy spendthrift (as Tyrrell at that time was), of coarse manners, and unpolished mind; with a person not, indeed, unprepossessing, but somewhat touched by time, and never more comparable to Glanville's than that of the Satyr to Hyperion.

While I was meditating over a mystery which excited my curiosity more powerfully than anything, not relating to himself, ought ever to occupy the attention of a wise man, I was accosted by Vincent: the difference in our politics had of late much dissevered us, and when he took my arm, and drew me up Bond-street, I was somewhat surprised at his condescension.

"Listen to me, Pelham," he said; "once more I offer you a settlement in our colony. There will be great changes soon: trust me, so radical a party as that you have adopted can never come in: ours, on the con-

trary, is no less moderate than liberal. This is the last time of asking; for I know you will soon have exposed your opinions in public more openly than you have yet done, and then it will be too late. At present I hold, with Hudibras, and the ancients, that it is—

'More honourable far, *servare*
Civem than slay an adversary.'

"Alas, Vincent," said I, "I am marked out for slaughter, for you cannot convince me by words, and so, I suppose, you must conquer me by blows. Adieu, this is my way to Lord Dawton's: where are you going?"

"To mount my horse, and join the *parca* juvenus," said Vincent, with a laugh at his own witticism, as we shook hands, and parted.

I grieve much, my beloved reader, that I cannot unfold to thee all the particulars of my political intrigue. I am, by the very share which fell to my lot, bound over to the strictest secrecy, as to its nature, and the characters of the chief agents in its execution. Suffice it to say, that the greater part of my time was, though furtively, employed in a sort of home diplomacy, gratifying alike to the activity of my tastes, and the vanity of my mind. I had filled Dawton, and his coadjutors, with an exaggerated opinion of my abilities; but I knew well how to sustain it. I rose by candle light, and consumed, in the intensest application, the hour which

every other individual of our party wasted in enervating slumbers, from the hesternal dissipation or debauch. Was there a question in political economy debated, mine was the readiest and the clearest reply. Did a period in our constitution become investigated, it was I to whom the duty of expositor was referred. From Madamed'Anville, with whom (though lost as a lover) I constantly corresponded as a friend, I obtained the earliest and most accurate detail of the prospects and manœuvres of the court in which her life was spent, and in whose more secret offices her husband was employed. I spared no means of extending my knowledge of every the minutest point which could add to the reputation I enjoyed. I made myself acquainted with the individual interests and exact circumstances of all whom it was our object to intimidate or to gain. It was I who brought to the House the younger and idler members, whom no more nominally powerful agent could allure from the ball-room or the gaming-house.

In short, while, by the dignity of my birth, and the independent hauteur of my bearing, I preserved the rank of an equal amongst the highest of the set, I did not scruple to take upon myself the labour and activity of the most subordinate. Dawton declared me his right hand; and, though I knew myself rather his head than his hand, I pretended to feel proud of the appellation.

Meanwhile, it was my pleasure to wear in society the eccentric costume of character I had first adopted, and to cultivate the arts which won from women the smile that cheered and encouraged me in my graver contest with men. It was only to Ellen Glanville, that I laid aside an affectation, which, I knew, was little likely to attract a taste so refined and unadulterated as hers. I discovered in her a mind which,

while it charmed me by its tenderness and freshness, elevated me by its loftiness of thought. She was, at heart, perhaps, as ambitious as myself; but while my aspirations were concealed by affectation, hers were softened by her timidity, and purified by her religion. There were moments when I opened myself to her, and caught a new spirit from her look of sympathy and enthusiasm.

"Yes," thought I, "I do long for honours, but it is that I may ask her to share and ennoble them." In fine, I loved as other men loved—and I fancied a perfection in her, and vowed an emulation in myself, which it was reserved for Time to ratify or deride.

Where did I leave myself? as the Irishman said;—on my road to Lord Dawton's. I was lucky enough to find that personage at home; he was writing at a table covered with pamphlets and books of reference.

"Hush! Pelham," said his lordship, who is a quiet, grave, meditative little man, always ruminating on a very small cud—"hush! or *do* oblige me by looking over this history, to find out the date of the Council of Pisa."

"That will do, my young friend," said his lordship, after I had furnished him with the information he required—"I wish to Heaven, I could finish this pamphlet by to-morrow: it is intended as an answer to ——. But I am so perplexed with business, that—"

"Perhaps," said I. "if you will pardon my interrupting you, I can throw your observations together—make your Silylline leaves into a book. Your lordship will find the matter, and I will not spare the trouble."

Lord Dawton was profuse in his thanks; he explained the subject, and left the arrangement wholly to me. He could not presume to dictate. I promised him, if he lent me the

necessary books, to finish the pamphlet against the following evening.

"And now," said Lord Dawton—"that we have settled this affair—what news from France?"—

* * * * *

"I wish," sighed Lord Dawton, as we were calculating our forces, "that we could gain over Lord Guloseton."

"What, the facetious epicure?" said I.

"The same," answered Dawton: "we want him as a dinner-giver; and, besides, he has four votes in the Lower House."

"Well," said I, "he is indolent

and independent—it is not impossible."

"Do you know him?" answered Dawton.

"No:" said I.

Dawton sighed.—"And young A——?" said the statesman, after a pause.

"Has an expensive mistress, and races. Your lordship might be sure of him, were you in power, and sure not to have him while you are out of it."

"And B.?" rejoined Dawton.

* * * * *

CHAPTER LVIII.

Mangez-vous bien, Monsieur?

Oui, et bois encore mieux.—Mons. de Perceaugnac.

My pamphlet took prodigiously. The authorship was attributed to one of the ablest members of the Opposition; and though there were many errors in style, and (I *now* think—*then* I did not, or I should not have written them,) many sophisms in the reasoning, yet it carried the end proposed by all ambition of whatever species—and imposed upon the taste of the public.

Some time afterwards, I was going down the stairs at Almack's, when I heard an altercation, high and grave, at the door of reception. To my surprise, I found Lord Guloseton and a very young man in great wrath; the latter had never been to Almack's before, and had forgotten his ticket. Guloseton, who belonged to a very different set from that of the Almackians, insisted that his word was enough to bear his juvenile companion through. The ticket-inspector was irate and ob-

durate, and, having seldom or never seen Lord Guloseton himself, paid very little respect to his authority.

As I was wrapping myself in my cloak, Guloseton turned to me, for passion makes men open their hearts: too eager for an opportunity of acquiring the epicure's acquaintance, I offered to get his friend admittance in an instant; the offer was delightedly accepted, and I soon procured a small piece of pencilled paper from Lady——which effectually silenced the Charon, and opened the Stygian via to the Elysium beyond.

Guloseton overwhelmed me with his thanks. I remounted the stairs with him—took every opportunity of ingratiating myself—received an invitation to dinner on the following day, and left Willis's transported at the goodness of my fortune.

At the hour of eight on the ensuing evening, I had just made my entrance

in Lord Guloaseton's drawing-room. It was a small apartment, furnished with great luxury and some taste. A Venus of Titian's was placed over the chimney-piece, in all the gorgeous voluptuousness of her unveiled beauty—the pouting lip, not *silent* though *shut*—the eloquent lid drooping over the eye, whose glances you could so easily imagine—the arms—the limbs—the attitude, so composed, yet so full of life—all seemed to indicate that sleep was not forgetfulness, and that the dreams of the goddess were not wholly inharmonious with the waking realities in which it was her gentle prerogative to indulge. On either side, was a picture of the delicate and golden hues of Claude; these were the only landscapes in the room; the remaining pictures were more suitable to the Venus of the luxurious Italian. Here was one of the beauties of Sir Peter Lely: there was an admirable copy of the Hero and Leander. On the table lay the Basia of Johannes Secundus, and a few French works on Gastronomy.

As for the *genius loci*—you must imagine a middle-sized, middle-aged man, with an air rather of delicate than florid health. But little of the effects of his good cheer were apparent in the external man. His cheeks were neither swollen nor inflated—his person, though not thin, was of no unwieldy obesity—the tip of his nasal organ was, it is true, of a more ruby tinge than the rest, and one carbuncle, of tender age and gentle dyes, diffused its mellow and moonlight influence over the physiognomical scenery—his forehead was high and bald, and the few locks which still rose above it, were carefully and gracefully curled à l'antique. Beneath a pair of grey shaggy brows, (which their noble owner had a strange habit of raising and depressing, according to the nature of his remarks,) rolled two very small, piercing, arch, restless orbs, of a tender green; and the mouth, which

was wide and thick-lipped, was expressive of great sensuality, and curved upwards in a perpetual smile.

Such was Lord Guloaseton. To my surprise no other guest but myself appeared.

"A new friend," said he, as we descended into the dining room, "is like a new dish—one must have him all to oneself, thoroughly to enjoy and rightly to understand him."

"A noble precept," said I, with enthusiasm. "Of all vices, indiscriminate hospitality is the most pernicious. It allows neither conversation nor dinner, and, realising the mythological fable of Tantalus, gives us starvation in the midst of plenty."

"You are right," said Guloaseton, solemnly; "I never ask above six persons to dinner, and I never dine out; for a bad dinner. Mr. Pelham, a bad dinner is a most serious—I may add, *the* most serious calamity."

"Yes," I replied, "for it carries with it no consolation: a buried friend may be replaced—a lost mistress renewed—a slandered character be recovered—even a broken constitution restored; but a dinner, once lost, is irremediable; that day is for ever departed; an appetite once thrown away can never, till the cruel prolixity of the gastric agents is over, be regained. '*Il y a tant de mattresses,*' (says the admirable Corneille,) '*il n'y a qu'un diner.*'"

"You speak like an oracle—like the *Cook's Oracle*, Mr. Pelham: may I send you some soup, it is à la *Carmélite*? But what are you about to do with that case?"

"It contains," said I, "my spoon, my knife, and my fork. Nature afflicted me with a propensity, which, through these machines, I have endeavoured to remedy by art. I eat with *too great a rapidity*. It is a most unhappy failing, for one often hurries over in *one* minute, what ought to have afforded the fullest delight for

the period of *five*. It is, indeed, a vice which deadens enjoyment, as well as abbreviates it; it is a shameful waste of the gifts, and a melancholy perversion of the bounty, of Providence. My conscience tormented me; but the habit, fatally indulged in early childhood, was not easy to overcome. At last I resolved to construct a spoon of peculiarly shallow dimensions, a fork so small, that it could only raise a certain portion to my mouth, and a knife rendered blunt and jagged, so that it required a proper and just time to carve the goods 'the gods provide me.' My lord, 'the lovely Thais sits beside me' in the form of a bottle of Madeira. Suffer me to take wine with you!"

"With pleasure, my good friend; let us drink to the memory of the Carmelites, to whom we are indebted for this inimitable soup."

"Yes!" I cried. "Let us for once shake off the prejudices of sectarian faith, and do justice to one order of those incomparable men, who, retiring from the cares of an idle and sinful world, gave themselves with undivided zeal and attention to the theory and practice of the profound science of gastronomy. It is reserved for us to pay a grateful tribute of memory to those exalted recluses, who, through a long period of barbarism and darkness, preserved, in the solitude of their cloisters, whatever of Roman luxury and classic dainties have come down to this later age. We will drink to the Carmelites as a sect, but we will drink also to the monks as a body. Had we lived in those days, we had been monks ourselves!"

"It is singular," answered Lord Guloaseton—" (by the by, what think you of this turbot?)—to trace the history of the kitchen; it affords the greatest scope to the philosopher and the moralist. The ancients seemed to have been more mental, more imaginative, than we are, in their

dishes; they fed their bodies as well as their minds upon delusion: for instance, they esteemed beyond all price the tongues of nightingales, because they tasted the very music of the birds in the organs of their utterance. That is what I call the poetry of gastronomy!"

"Yes," said I, with a sigh, "they certainly had, in some respects, the advantage over us. Who can pore over the suppers of Apicius without the fondest regret? The venerable Ude* implies, that the study has not progressed. 'Cookery (he says, in the first part of his work) possesses but few innovators.'"

"It is with the greatest diffidence," said Guloaseton, (his mouth full of truth and turbot,) "that we may dare to differ from so great an authority. Indeed, so high is my veneration for that wise man, that if all the evidence of my sense and reason were on one side, and the dictum of the great Ude upon the other, I should be inclined—I think, I *should be deter mined*—to relinquish the former, and adopt the latter."†

"Bravo, Lord Guloaseton," cried I, warmly. "'*Qu'un Cuisinier est un mortel divin!*' Why should we not be proud of our knowledge in cookery? It is the soul of festivity at all times, and to all ages. How many marriages have been the consequence of meeting at dinner. How much good fortune has been the result of a good supper? At what moment of our existence are we happier than at table? There hatred and animosity are lulled to sleep, and pleasure alone reigns. Here the cook, by his skill and attention, anticipates our wishes in the happiest selection of the best dishes and decorations. Here our wants are satisfied, our minds and

* Qu. The venerable Bede?—Printer's Devil.

† See the speech of Mr. Brougham in honour of Mr. Fox.

bodies invigorated, and ourselves qualified for the high delights of love, music, poetry, dancing, and other pleasures; and is he, whose talents have produced these happy effects, to rank no higher in the scale of man than a common servant? *

"Yes," cries the venerable professor himself, in a virtuous and prophetic paroxysm of indignant merit—"yes, my disciples, if you adopt, and attend to the rules I have laid down, the self-love of mankind will consent at last, that cookery shall rank in the class of the sciences, and its professors deserve the name of artists!" †

"My dear, dear Sir," exclaimed Gulo seton, with a kindred glow, "I discover in you a spirit similar to my own. Let us drink long life to the venerable Ude!"

"I pledge you, with all my soul," said I, filling my glass to the brim.

"What a pity," rejoined Gulo seton, "that Ude, whose *practical* science was so perfect, should ever have written, or suffered others to write, the work published under his name; true it is that the opening part, which you have so feelingly recited, is composed with a grace, a charm beyond the reach of art; but the instructions are vapid and frequently so erroneous, as to make us suspect their authenticity; but, after all, cooking is not capable of becoming a written science—it is the philosophy of practice!"

"Ah! by Lucullus," exclaimed I, interrupting my host, "what a visionary *béchamelle*! Oh, the inimitable sauce; these chickens are indeed worthy of the honour of being dressed. Never, my lord, as long as you live, eat a chicken in the country; excuse a pun, you will have *foul* fare.

* J'ai toujours redouté la volaille perfide,
Qui brave les efforts d'une dent intrépide.

* Ude, verbatim.

† Ibid.

Souvent, par un ami dans ses champs entraîné,

J'ai reconnu le soir le coq infortuné

Qui m'avait le matin à l'aurore naissante
Réveillé brusquement de sa voix glapissante;

Je l'avais admiré dans le sein de la cour;
Avec des yeux jaloux, j'avais vu son amour.

Hélas! le malheureux, abjurant sa tendresse,

Exerçait au souper sa fureur vengeresse.*

Pardon the prolixity of my quotation for the sake of its value."

"I do, I do," answered Gulo seton, laughing at the humour of the lines: till, suddenly checking himself, he said, "we must be grave, Mr. Pelham, it will never do to laugh. What would become of our digestions?"

"True," said I, relapsing into seriousness; "and if you will allow me one more quotation, you will see what my author adds with regard to any abrupt interruption.

* Défendez que personne, au milieu d'un banquet,

Ne vous vienne donner un avis indiscret;
Ecarter ce fâcheux qui vers vous s'achemine;

Rien ne doit déranger l'honnête homme
qui dîne." †

"Admirable advice," said Gulo seton,

* *Ever I dread (when dup'd a day to spend
At his snug villa, by some fatal friend)
Grim chanticleer, whose breast, devoid of*

*ruth,
Braves the stout effort of the desperate*

*tooth.
Oft have I recognised at eve, the bird
Whose morning notes my ear prophetic*

*heard,
Whose tender courtship won my pain'd*

*regard,
Amidst the plum'd seraglio of the yard.
Tender no more—behold him in your*

*plate—
And know, while eating, you avenge his*

*fate.
† At meals no access to the indiscreet;
All are intruders on the wise who eat.*

In that blest hour, your bore's the veriest

*sinner!
Nought must disturb a man a worth—at*

dinner

toying with a *fillet mignon de poulet*. "Do you remember an example in the Bailly of Sulfren, who, being in India, was waited upon by a deputation of natives while he was at dinner? 'Tell them,' said he, 'that the Christian religion peremptorily forbids every Christian, while at table, to occupy himself with any earthly subject, except the function of eating.' The deputation retired in the profoundest respect at the exceeding devotion of the French general."

"Well," said Lafter we had chuckled gravely and quietly, with the care of our digestion before us, for a few minutes—"well, however good the invention was, the idea is not entirely new, for the Greeks esteemed eating and drinking plentifully, a sort of offering to the gods; and Aristotle explains the very word, *Gourai*, or feasts, by an etymological exposition, 'that it was thought a duty to the gods to be drunk'; no bad idea of our classical patterns of antiquity. Polypheme, too, in the Cyclops of Euripides, no doubt a very sound theologian, says, his stomach is his only deity; and Xenophon tells us, that as the Athenians exceeded all other people in the number of their gods, so they exceeded them also in the number of their feasts. May I send your lordship a quail?"

"Pelham, my boy," said Guloetson, whose eyes began to roll and twinkle with a brilliancy suited to the various liquids which ministered to their rejoicing orbs; "I love you for your classics. Polypheme was a wise fellow, a very wise fellow, and it was a terrible shame in Ulysses to put out his eye! No wonder that the ingenious savage made a deity of his stomach; to what known visible source, on this earth, was he indebted for a keener enjoyment—a more rapturous and a more constant delight? No wonder he honoured it with his gratitude, and supplied it with his peace-offerings;

—let us imitate so great an example:—let us make our digestive receptacles a temple, to which we will consecrate the choicest goods we possess;—let us conceive no pecuniary sacrifice too great, which procures for our altar an acceptable gift;—let us deem it an impiety to hesitate, if a sauce seems extravagant, or an ortolan too dear; and let our last act in this sublunary existence be a solemn festival in honour of our unceasing benefactor!"

"Amen to your creed!" said I: "edibiliary Epicurism holds the key to all morality: for do we not see now how sinful it is to yield to an obscene and exaggerated intemperance?—would it not be to the last degree ungrateful to the great source of our enjoyment, to overload it with a weight which would oppress it with languor, or harass it with pain; and finally to drench away the effects of our impiety with some nauseous potion which revolts it, tortures it, convulses, irritates, enfeebles it, through every particle of its system? How wrong in us to give way to anger, jealousy, revenge, or any evil passion: for does not all that affects the mind operate also upon the stomach; and how can we be so vicious, so obdurate, as to forget, for a momentary indulgence, our debt to what you have so justly designated our perpetual benefactor?"

"Right," said Lord Guloetson, "a bumper to the Morality of the Stomach."

The dessert was now on the table. "I have dined well," said Guloetson, stretching his legs with an air of supreme satisfaction; "but—" and here my philosopher sighed deeply—"we cannot *dine again till to-morrow*! Happy, happy, happy common people, who can eat supper! Would to Heaven, that I might have one boon perpetual appetite—a digestive Hourri, which renewed its virginity every time it was touched. Alas! for

the instability of human enjoyment. But now that we have no immediate hope to anticipate, let us cultivate the pleasures of memory. What thought you of the *veau à la Dauphine*?"

"Pardon me if I hesitate at giving my opinion, till I have corrected my judgment by yours."

"Why, then, I own I was somewhat displeased—disappointed as it were—with that dish; the fact is, veal ought to be killed in its very first infancy; they suffer it to grow to too great an age. It becomes a sort of *hobbydehoy*, and possesses nothing of veal, but its insipidity, or of beef, but its toughness."

"Yes," said I, "it is only in their veal, that the French surpass us; their other meats want the ruby juices and elastic freshness of ours. Monsieur L—— allowed this truth, with a candour worthy of his vast mind. *Mon Dieu!* what claret!—what a body! and, let me add, what a soul, beneath it! Who would *drink* wine like this? it is only made to *taste*. It is the first love—too pure for the eagerness of enjoyment; the rapture it inspires is in a touch, a kiss. It is a pity, my lord, that we do not serve perfumes at dessert; it is their appropriate place. In confectionary (delicate invention of the Sylphs,) we imitate the forms of the rose and the jasmine; why not their odours too? What is nature without its scents?—and as long as they are absent from our desserts, it is in vain that the bard exclaims—

—— 'L'observateur de la belle Nature
S'exaltie en voyant des fleurs en confiture.'

"It is an exquisite idea of yours," said Gulo seton—"and the next time you dine here we will have perfumes. Dinner ought to be a reunion of all the senses—

Gladness to the ear, nerve, heart, and
sense."

There was a momentary pause. "My lord," said I, "what a lusciousness in this pear! it is like the style of the old English poets. What think you of the seeming good understanding between Mr. Gaskell and the Whigs?"

"I trouble myself little about it," replied Gulo seton, helping himself to some preserves—"politics disturb the digestion."

"Well," thought I, "I must ascertain some point in this man's character easier to handle than his epicurism: all men are vain: let us find out the peculiar vanity of mine host."

"The ultra-Tories," said I, "seem to think themselves exceedingly secure; they attach no importance to the neutral members; it was but the other day Lord —— told me that he did not care a straw for Mr. ——, notwithstanding he possessed *four* votes. Heard you ever such arrogance?"

"No, indeed," said Gulo seton, with a lazy air of indifference—"are you a favourer of the olive?"

"No," said I, "I love it not; it hath an under taste of sourness, and an upper of oil, which do not make harmony to my palate. But, as I was saying, the Whigs, on the contrary, pay the utmost deference to their partisans; and a man of fortune, rank, and parliamentary influence, might have all the power, without the trouble, of a leader."

"Very likely," said Gulo seton, drowsily.

"I must change my battery," thought I; but while I was meditating a new attack, the following note was brought me:

"For Heaven's sake, Pelham, come out to me: I am waiting in the street to see you; come directly, or it will be too late to render me the service I would ask of you.

"R GLANVILLE."

I rose instantly. "You must excuse me, Lord Guloseton, I am called suddenly away."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the gourmand; "some tempting viand—*post prandia Callirhoë!*"

"My good lord," said I, not heed-

ing his insinuation—"I leave you with the greatest regret."

"And I part from you with the same; it is a real pleasure to see such a person at dinner."

"Adieu! my host—'*Je rais vivre et manger en sage.*'"

CHAPTER LIX.

I do defy him, and I spit at him,
Call him a slanderous coward and a villain—
Which to maintain I will allow him odds.—SHAKESPEARE

I FOUND Glanville walking before the door with a rapid and uneven step.

"Thank Heaven!" he said, when he saw me; "I have been twice to Mivart's to find you. The second time, I saw your servant, who told me where you were gone. I knew you well enough to be sure of your kindness."

Glanville broke off abruptly; and after a short pause, said, with a quick, low, hurried tone—"The office I wish you to take upon yourself is this:—go immediately to Sir John Tyrrell, with a challenge from me. Ever since I last saw you, I have been hunting out that man, and in vain. He had then left town. He returned this evening, and quits it to-morrow: you have no time to lose."

"My dear Glanville," said I, "I have no wish to learn any secret you would conceal from me; but forgive me if I ask some further instructions than those you have afforded me. Upon what plea am I to call out Sir John Tyrrell? and what answer am I to give to any excuses he may make?"

"I have anticipated your reply," said Glanville, with ill-simulated impatience; "you have only to give this paper: it will prevent all discussion. Read it; I have left it unsealed for that purpose."

I cast my eyes over the lines Glanville thrust into my hand; they ran thus:

"The time has at length come for me to demand the atonement so long delayed. The bearer of this, who is, probably, known to you, will arrange, with any person you may appoint, the hour and place of our meeting. He is unacquainted with the grounds of my complaint against you, but he is satisfied of my honour: your second will, I presume, be the same with respect to *pours*. It is for me only to question the latter, and to declare you solemnly to be void alike of principle and courage, a villain, and a poltroon.

"REGINALD GLANVILLE."

"You are my earliest friend," said I, when I had read this soothing epistle; "and I will not flinch from the place you assign me: but I tell you fairly and frankly, that I would sooner cut off my right hand than suffer it to give this note to Sir John Tyrrell."

Glanville made no answer; we walked on, till suddenly stopping, he said, "My carriage is at the corner of the street; you must go instantly; Tyrrell lodge at the Clarendon: you will find me at home on your return."

I pressed his hand, and hurried on my mission. It was, I own, one peculiarly unwelcome and displeasing. In the first place, I did not love to be made a party in a business of the nature of which I was so profoundly ignorant. Secondly, if the affair terminated fatally, the world would not lightly condemn me for conveying to a gentleman of birth and fortune, a letter so insulting, and for causes of which I was so ignorant. Again, too, Glanville was more dear to me than any one, judging only of my external character, would suppose; and, constitutionally indifferent as I am to danger for myself, I trembled like a woman at the peril I was instrumental in bringing upon him. But what weighed upon me far more than any of these reflections, was the recollection of Ellen. Should her brother fall in an engagement in which I was his supposed adviser, with what success could I hope for those feelings from her, which, at present, constituted the tenderest and the brightest of my hopes? In the midst of these disagreeable ideas, the carriage stopped at the door of Tyrrell's Hotel.

The waiter said Sir John was in the coffee-room; thither I immediately marched. Seated in the box nearest the fire sat Tyrrell, and two men of that old-fashioned *roué* set, whose members indulged in debauchery, as if it were an attribute of manliness, and esteemed it, as long as it were hearty and English, rather a virtue to boast of, than a vice to disown. Tyrrell nodded to me familiarly as I approached him; and I saw, by the half-emptied bottles before him, and the flush of his sallow countenance, that he had not been sparing of his libations. I whispered that I wished to speak to him on a subject of great importance; he rose with much reluctance, and, after swallowing a large tumbler-full of port wine to fortify him for the task, he led the way to a

small room, where he seated himself, and asked me, with his usual mixture of bluntness and good-breeding, the nature of my business. I made him no reply: I contented myself with placing Glanville's *billet doux* in his hand. The room was dimly lighted with a single candle, and the small and capricious fire, near which the gambler was seated, threw its *upward* light, by starts and intervals, over the strong features and deep lines of his countenance. It would have been a study worthy of Rembrandt.

I drew my chair near him, and half shading my eyes with my hand, sat down in silence to mark the effect the letter would produce. Tyrrell (I imagine) was a man originally of hardy nerves, and had been thrown much into the various situations of life where the disguise of all outward emotion is easily and insensibly taught; but whether his frame had been shattered by his excesses, or that the insulting language of the note touched him to the quick, he seemed perfectly unable to govern his feelings; the lines were written hastily, and the light, as I said before, was faint and imperfect, and he was forced to pause over each word as he proceeded, so that "the iron" had full time to "enter into his soul."

Passion, however, developed itself differently in him than in Glanville: in the latter, it was a rapid transition of powerful feelings, one angry wave dashing over another; it was the passion of a strong and keenly susceptible mind, to which every sting was a dagger, and which used the force of a giant to dash away the insect which attacked it. In Tyrrell, it was passion acting on a callous mind but a broken frame—his hand trembled violently—his voice faltered—he could scarcely command the muscles which enabled him to speak; but there was no fiery start—no indignant burst—no flashing forth of the soul:—in him, it was

the body overcoming and paralysing the mind; in Glanville it was the mind governing and convulsing the body.

"Mr. Pelham," he said at last, after a few preliminary efforts to clear his voice, "this note requires some consideration. I know not at present whom to appoint as my second—will you call upon me early to-morrow?"

"I am sorry," said I, "that my sole instructions were to get an immediate answer from you. Surely either of the gentlemen I saw with you would officiate as your second?"

Tyrrell made no reply for some moments. He was endeavouring to compose himself, and in some measure he succeeded. He raised his head with a haughty air of defiance, and tearing the paper deliberately, though still with uncertain and trembling fingers, he stamped his foot upon the atoms.

"Tell your principal," said he, "that I retort upon him the foul and false words he has uttered against me; that I trample upon his assertions with the same scorn I feel towards himself; and that before this hour to-morrow I will confront him to death as through life. For the rest, Mr. Pelham, I cannot name my second till the morning; leave me your address, and you shall hear from me before you are stirring. Have you anything farther with me?"

"Nothing," said I, laying my card on the table, "I have fulfilled the most ungrateful charge ever intrusted to me. I wish you good night."

I re-entered the carriage, and drove to Glanville's. I broke into the room rather abruptly; Glanville was leaning on the table, and gazing intently on a small miniature. A pistol-case

lay beside him: one of the pistols in order for use, and the other still unnarranged; the room was, as usual, covered with books and papers, and on the costly cushions of the ottoman lay the large, black dog, which I remembered well as his companion of yore, and which he kept with him constantly, as the only thing in the world whose society he could at all times bear: the animal lay curled up, with its quick, black eye fixed watchfully upon its master, and directly I entered, it uttered, though without moving, a low, warning growl.

Glanville looked up, and in some confusion thrust the picture into a drawer of the table, and asked me my news. I told him word for word what had passed. Glanville set his teeth, and clenched his hand firmly; and then, as if his anger was at once appeased, he suddenly changed the subject and tone of our conversation. He spoke with great cheerfulness and humour on the various topics of the day; touched upon politics; laughed at Lord Gulocton, and seemed as indifferent and unconscious of the event of the morrow as my peculiar constitution would have rendered myself.

When I rose to depart, for I had too great an interest in *him* to feel much for the subjects he conversed on, he said, "I shall write one line to my mother, and another to my poor sister; you will deliver them if I fall, for I have sworn that one of us shall not quit the ground alive. I shall be all impatience to know the hour you will arrange with Tyrrell's second. God bless you, and farewell for the present."

CHAPTER LX.

Charge, Chester, charge!—*Marmton.*

Though this was one of the first *mercantile* transactions of my life, I had no doubt about acquitting myself with reputation.—*Vicar of Wakefield.*

THE next morning I was at breakfast, when a packet was brought me from Tyrrell; it contained a sealed letter to Glanville, and a brief note to myself. The latter I transcribe.—

“MY DEAR SIR,

“The enclosed letter to Sir Reginald Glanville will explain my reasons for not keeping my pledge: suffice it to state to you, that they are such as wholly to exonerate me, and fairly to satisfy Sir Reginald. It will be useless to call upon me; I leave town before you will receive this. Respect for myself obliges me to add that, although there are circumstances to forbid my meeting Sir Reginald Glanville, there are none to prevent my demanding satisfaction of any one, *whoever he may be*, who shall deem himself authorised to call my motives into question,

“I have the honour, &c.

“JOHN TYRRELL.”

It was not till I had thrice read this letter that I could credit its contents. From all I had seen of Tyrrell's character, I had no reason to suspect him to be less courageous than the generality of worldly men. And yet, when I considered the violent language of Glanville's letter, and Tyrrell's apparent resolution the night before, I scarcely knew to what more honourable motive than the want of courage to attribute his conduct. However, I lost no time in despatching the whole packet to Glanville,

with a few lines from myself, saying I should call in an hour.

When I fulfilled this promise, Glanville's servant told me his master had gone out immediately on reading the letters I had sent, and had merely left word that he should not return home the whole day. That night he was to have brought an important motion before the House. A message from him, pleading sudden and alarming illness, devolved this duty upon another member of his party. Lord Dawton was in despair; the motion was lost by a great majority; the papers, the whole of that week, were filled with the most triumphant abuse and ridicule of the Whigs. Never was that unhappy and persecuted party reduced to so low an ebb: never did there seem a fainter probability of their coming into power. They appeared almost annihilated—a mere *nominis umbra*.

On the eighth day from Glanville's disappearance, a sudden event in the cabinet threw the whole country into confusion; the Tories trembled to the very soles of their easy slippers of sinecure and office: the eyes of the public were turned to the Whigs; and chance seemed to effect in an instant that change in their favour which all their toil, trouble, eloquence, and art, had been unable for so many years to render even a remote probability.

But there was a strong though secret party in the state that, concealed under a general name, worked

only for a private end, and made a progress in number and respectability, not the less sure for being but little suspected. Foremost among the leaders of this party was Lord Vincent. Dawton, who regarded them with fear and jealousy, considered the struggle rather between them and himself, than any longer between himself and the Tories; and strove, while it was yet time, to reinforce himself by a body of allies, which, should the contest really take place, might be certain of giving him the superiority. The Marquis of Chester was among the most powerful of the neutral noblemen: it was of the greatest importance to gain him to the cause. He was a sturdy, sporting,

independent man, who lived chiefly in the country, and turned his ambition rather towards promoting the excellence of quadrupeds, than the bad passions of men. To this personage Lord Dawton implored me to be the bearer of a letter, and to aid, with all the dexterity in my power the purpose it was intended to effect. It was the most consequential mission yet intrusted to me, and I felt eager to turn my diplomatic energies to so good an account. Accordingly, one bright morning I wrapped myself carefully in my cloak, placed my invaluable person safely in my carriage, and set off to Chester Park, in the county of Suffolk.

CHAPTER LXL

Hinc canibus blandis rabies venit.—VIRGIL, Georg.

I SHOULD have mentioned, that the day after I sent to Glanville: Tyrrell's communication, I received a short and hurried note from the former, saying, that he had left London in pursuit of Tyrrell, and that he would not rest till he had brought him to account. In the hurry of the public events in which I had been of late so actively engaged, my mind had not had leisure to dwell much upon Glanville; but when I was alone in my carriage, that singular being, and the mystery which attended him, forced themselves upon my reflection, in spite of all the importance of my mission.

I was leaning back in my carriage, at (I think) Ware, while they were changing horses, when a voice, strongly associated with my meditations, struck upon my ear. I looked out, and saw Thornton standing in the yard, attired with all his original smartness of boot and breeches: he was employed in

smoking a cigar, sipping brandy and water, and exercising his conversational talents in a mixture of slang and jockeyism, addressed to two or three men of his own rank of life, and seemingly his companions. His brisk eye soon discovered me, and he swaggered to the carriage door with that ineffable assurance of manner which was so peculiarly his own.

"Ah, ah, Mr. Pelham," said he, "going to Newmarket, I suppose? bound there myself—like to be found among my *betters*. Ha, ha—excuse a pun: what odds on the favourite? What, you won't bet, Mr. Pelham? close and sly at present; well, *the silent sow saps up all the broth—eh!*—"

"I'm not going to Newmarket," I replied: "I never attend races."

"Indeed!" answered Thornton. "Well, if I was as rich as you, I would soon make or spend a fortune on the

course. Seen Sir John Tyrrell? No! He is to be there. Nothing can cure him of gambling—what's bred in the bone, &c. Good day, Mr. Pelham—won't keep you any longer—sharp shower coming on. 'The devil will soon be basting his wife with a leg of mutton,' as the proverb says:—servant, Mr. Pelham."

And at these words my post-boy started, and released me from my *bête noire*. I spare my reader an account of my miscellaneous reflections on Thornton, Dawton, Vincent, politics, Glanville, and *Ellen*, and will land him, without further delay, at Chester Park.

I was ushered through a large oak hall of the reign of James the First, into a room strongly resembling the principal apartment of a club: two or three round tables were covered with newspapers, journals, racing calendars, &c. An enormous fire-place was crowded with men of all ages, I had almost said, of all ranks; but, however various they might appear in their mien and attire, they were wholly of the patrician order. One thing, however, in this room, belied its likeness to the apartment of a club, viz., a number of dogs, that lay in scattered groups upon the floor. Before the windows were several horses, in body-cloths, led to exercise upon a plain in the park, levelled as smooth as a bowling-green at Putney; and, stationed at an oriel window, in earnest attention to the scene without, were two men; the tallest of these was Lord Chester. There was a stiffness and inelegance in his address which prepossessed me strongly against him. "*Les manières que l'on néglige comme de petites choses, sont souvent ce qui fait que les hommes décident de vous en bien ou en mal.*" *

* "The manners which one neglects as trifles, are often precisely that by which men decide on you favourably or the reverse."

I had long since, when I was at the University, been introduced to Lord Chester; but I had quite forgotten his person, and he the very circumstance. I said, in a low tone, that I was the bearer of a letter of some importance from our mutual friend, Lord Dawton, and that I should request the honour of a private interview at Lord Chester's first convenience.

His lordship bowed, with an odd mixture of the civility of a jockey and the hauteur of a head groom of the stud, and led the way to a small apartment, which I afterwards discovered he called his own. (I never could make out, by the way, why, in England, the very worst room in the house is always appropriated to the master of it, and dignified by the appellation of "the gentleman's own.") I gave the Newmarket grandee the letter intended for him, and quietly seating myself, awaited the result.

He read it through slowly and silently, and then, taking out a huge pocket-book, full of racing bets, horses' ages, jockey opinions, and such like memoranda, he placed it with much solemnity among this dignified company, and said, with a cold, but would-be courteous air, "My friend, Lord Dawton, says you are entirely in his confidence, Mr. Pelham. I hope you will honour me with your company at Chester Park for two or three days, during which time I shall have leisure to reply to Lord Dawton's letter. Will you take some refreshment?"

I answered the first sentence in the affirmative, and the latter in the negative; and Lord Chester, thinking it perfectly unnecessary to trouble himself with any further questions or remarks, which the whole jockey club might not hear, took me back into the room we had quitted, and left me to find, or make, whatever acquaintance I could. Pampered and spoiled as I was in the most difficult circles of

London, I was beyond measure indignant at the cavalier demeanour of this rusticthane, who, despite his marquisate and his acres, was not less below me in the aristocracy of ancient birth, than in that of cultivated intellect. I looked round the room, and did not recognise a being of my acquaintance: I seemed literally thrown into a new world: the very language in which the conversation was held, sounded strange to my ear. I had always transgressed my general rule of knowing all men in all grades, in the single respect of *sporting characters*: they were a species of bipeds that I would never recognise as belonging to the human race. Alas! I now found the bitter effects of not following my usual maxims. It is a dangerous thing to encourage too great a disdain of one's inferiors: pride must have a fall.

After I had been a whole quarter of an hour in this strange place, my better genius came to my aid. Since I found no society among the two-legged brutes, I turned to the quadrupeds. At one corner of the room lay a black terrier of the true English breed; at another was a short, sturdy, wiry one, of the Scotch. I soon formed a friendship with each of these *canine Peleï*, (little bodies with great souls), and then by degrees alluring them from their retreat to the centre of the

room, I fairly endeavoured to set them by the ears. Thanks to the national antipathy, I succeeded to my heart's content. The contest soon aroused the other individuals of the genus—up they started from their repose, like Roderic Dhu's merry men, and incontinently flocked to the scene of battle. The example became contagious. In a very few moments, the whole room was a scene of uproarious confusion; the beasts yelled, and bit, and struggled with the most delectable ferocity. To add to the effect, the various owners of the dogs crowded round—some to stimulate, others to appease, the fury of the combatants. At length, the conflict was assuaged. By dint of blows, and kicks, and remonstrances from their dignified proprietors, the dogs slowly withdrew, one with the loss of half an ear, another with a mouth increased by one-half of its natural dimensions, and, in short, every one of the combatants with some token of the severity of the conflict. I did not wait for the thunder-storm I foresaw in the inquiry as to the origin of the war: I rose with a *non-chalant* yawn of *ennui*, marched out of the apartment, called a servant, demanded my own room, repaired to it, and immersed the internal faculties of my head in Mignet's History of the Revolution, while Bedos busied himself in its outward embellishment.

CHAPTER LXII.

——— *Noster ludos, spectaverat unâ,
Luserat in campo, Fortunæ filius, omnes.*—HOR.

I DID not leave my room till the first dinner-bell had ceased a sufficient time to allow me the pleasing hope that I should have but a few moments to wait in the drawing-room, previously to the grand epoch and ceremony of an European day. The manner most natural to me, is one rather open and easy; but I pique myself peculiarly upon a certain (though occasional,) air which keeps impertinence aloof. This day I assumed a double quantum of dignity, in entering a room which I well knew would not be filled with my admirers; there were a few women round Lady Chester, and, as I always feel reassured by a sight of the dear sex, I walked towards them.

Judge of my delight, when I discovered, amongst the group, Lady Harriet Garrett. It is true that I had no particular predilection for that lady; but the sight of a negress I had seen before, I should have hailed with rapture in so desolate and inhospitable a place. If my pleasure at seeing Lady Harriet was great, hers seemed equally so at receiving my salutation. She asked me if I knew Lady Chester—and on my negative reply, immediately introduced me to that personage. I now found myself quite at home; my spirits rose, and I exerted every nerve to be as charming as possible.—In youth, to endeavour is to succeed.

I gave a most animated account of the canine battle, interspersed with various sarcasms on the owners of the combatants, which were by no means

ill-received either by the marchioness or her companions; and, in fact, when the dinner was announced, they all rose in a mirth sufficiently unrestrained to be anything but patrician: for my part, I offered my arm to Lady Harriet, and paid her as many compliments on crossing the suite that led to the dining-room, as would have turned a much wiser head than her ladyship's.

The dinner went off agreeably enough, as long as the women stayed, but the moment they quitted the room, I experienced exactly the same feeling known unto a mother's darling, left for the first time at that strange, cold, comfortless place—ycleped a school.

I was not, however, in a mood to suffer my flowers of oratory to blush unseen. Besides, it was absolutely necessary that I should make a better impression upon my host. I leant, therefore, across the table, and listened eagerly to the various conversations afloat: at last I perceived on the opposite side Sir Lionel Garrett, a personage whom I had not before even inquired after, or thought of. He was busily and noisily employed in discussing the game-laws. Thank Heaven, thought I, I shall be on firm ground there. The general interest of the subject, and the loudness with which it was debated, soon drew all the scattered conversation into one focus.

"What!" said Sir Lionel, in a high voice, to a modest, shrinking youth, probably from Cambridge, who

had supported the liberal side of the question—"what! are our interests to be *never* consulted? Are we to have our only amusement taken away from us? What do you imagine brings country gentlemen to their seats? Do you not know, sir, the vast importance our residence at our country houses is to the nation? Destroy the game-laws, and you destroy our very existence as a people!"

"Now," thought I, "it is my time."

"Sir Lionel," said I, speaking almost from one end of the table to the other, "I perfectly agree with your sentiments; I am entirely of opinion, first, that it is absolutely necessary for the safety of the nation that game should be preserved; secondly, that if you take away game you take away country gentlemen: no two propositions can be clearer than these; but I do differ from you with respect to the intended alterations. Let us put wholly out of the question, the interests of the poor people, or of society at large: those are minor matters, not worthy of a moment's consideration; let us only see how far *our* interests as sportsmen will be affected. I think by a very few words I can clearly prove to you, that the proposed alterations will make us much better off than we are at present."

I then entered shortly, yet fully enough, into the nature of the laws as they now stood, and as they were intended to be changed. I first spoke of the two great disadvantages of the present system to country gentlemen; viz. in the number of poachers, and the expense of preserving. Observing that I was generally and attentively listened to, I dwelt upon these two points with much pathetic energy; and having paused till I had got Sir Lionel and one or two of his supporters to confess that it would be highly desirable that these defects should, *if possible*, be remedied, I proceeded to show how, and in what

manner it *was* possible. I argued, that to effect this possibility was the exact object of the alterations suggested; I anticipated the objections. I answered them in the form of propositions as clearly and concisely stated as possible; and as I spoke with great civility and conciliation, and put aside every appearance of care for any human being in the world who was not possessed of a qualification, I perceived at the conclusion of my harangue that I had made a very favourable impression. That evening completed my triumph: for Lady Chester and Lady Harriet made so good a story of my adventure with the dogs, that the matter passed off as a famous joke, and I was soon considered by the whole knot as a devilish amusing, good-natured, sensible fellow. So true is it that there is no situation which a little tact cannot turn to our own account: manage *yourself* well, and you may manage all the world.

As for Lord Chester, I soon won his heart by a few feats of horsemanship, and a few extempore inventions respecting the sagacity of dogs. Three days after my arrival we became inseparable; and I made such good use of my time, that in two more, he spoke to me of his friendship for Dawton, and his wish for a dukedom. These motives it was easy enough to unite, and at last he promised me that his answer to my principal should be as acquiescent as I could desire; the morning after this promise commenced *the great day* at Newmarket.

Our whole party were of course bound to the race ground, and with great reluctance I was pressed into the service. We were not many miles distant from the course, and Lord Chester mounted me on one of his horses. Our shortest way lay through rather an intricate series of cross roads: and as I was very little interested in the conversation of my com-

panions. I paid more attention to the scenery we passed, than is my customary wont: for I study Nature rather in men than fields, and find no landscape afford such variety to the eye, and such subject to the contemplation, as the inequalities of the human heart.

But there were to be fearful circumstances hereafter, to stamp forcibly upon my remembrance some traces of the scenery which now courted and arrested my view. The chief characteristics of the country were broad, dreary plains, diversified at times by dark plantations of fir and larch; the road was rough and stony, and here and there a melancholy rivulet, swelled by the first rains of spring, crossed our path, and lost itself in the rank weeds of some inhospitable marsh.

About six miles from Chester Park, to the left of the road, stood an old house with a new face; the brown, time-honoured bricks which composed the fabric, were strongly contrasted by large Venetian windows newly inserted in frames of the most ostentatious white. A smart, green veranda, scarcely finished, ran along the low portico, and formed the termination to two thin rows of meagre and dwarfish sycamores, which did duty for an avenue, and were bounded on the roadside by a spruce white gate, and a sprucer lodge, so moderate in its dimensions, that it would scarcely have boiled a turnip!—if a rat had got into it, he might have run away with it! The ground was dug in various places, as if for the purpose of further *improvements*, and here and there a sickly little tree was carefully burdled round, and seemed pining its puny heart out at the confinement.

In spite of all these well-judged and well-thriving graces of art, there was such a comfortless and desolate appearance about the place, that it quite froze one to look at it; to be sure, a

damp marsh on one side, and the skeleton rafters and beams of an old stable on the other, backed by a few dull and sulky-looking fir-trees, might in some measure create, or at least considerably add to, the indescribable cheerlessness of the *tout ensemble*. While I was curiously surveying the various parts of this northern "*Délices*," and marvelling at the choice of two crows who were slowly walking over the unwholesome ground, instead of making all possible use of the black wings with which Providence had gifted them, I perceived two men on horseback wind round from the back part of the building, and proceed in a brisk trot down the avenue. We had not advanced many paces before they overtook us; the foremost of them turned round as he passed me, and pulling up his horse abruptly, discovered to my dismayed view the features of Mr. Thornton. Nothing abashed by the slowness of my bow, or the grave stares of my lordly companions, who never forgot the dignity of their birth, in spite of the vulgarity of their tastes, Thornton instantly and familiarly accosted me.

"Told you so, Mr. Pelham—*silent sown*, &c.—Sure I should have the pleasure of seeing you, though you kept it so snug. Well, will you bet *now*? No!—Ah, you're a sly one. Staying here at that *nice-looking* house—belongs to Dawson, an old friend of mine—shall be happy to introduce you!"

"Sir," said I, abruptly, "you are too good. Permit me to request that you will rejoin your friend Mr. Dawson."

"Oh," said the imperturbable Thornton, "it does not signify; he won't be affronted at my lagging a little. However," (and here he caught my eye, which was assuming a sternness that perhaps little pleased him,) "however, as it gets late, and my mare is none of the best, I'll

wish you good morning. With these words Thornton put spurs to his horse and trotted off.

"Who the devil have you got there, Pelham?" said Lord Chester.

"A person," said I, "who picked me up at Paris, and insists on the right of 'treasure trove' to claim me in England. But will you let me ask, in my turn, whom that cheerful mansion we have just left, belongs to?"

"To a Mr. Dawson, whose father was a gentleman farmer who bred horses, a very respectable person,—for I made one or two excellent bargains with him. The son was always on the turf and contracted the worst of its habits. He bears but a very indifferent character, and will probably become a complete black-leg. He married, a short time since, a woman of some fortune, and I suppose it is her taste which has so altered and modernised his house. Come, gentlemen, we are on even ground, shall we trot?"

We proceeded but a few yards before we were again stopped by a precipitous ascent, and as Lord Chester was then earnestly engaged in praising his horse to one of the cavalcade, I had time to remark the spot. At the foot of the hill we were about slowly to ascend, was a broad, unenclosed patch of waste land; a heron, flapping its enormous wings as it rose, directed my attention to a pool overgrown with rushes, and half-sheltered on one side by a decayed tree, which, if one might judge from the breadth and hollowness of its trunk, had been a refuge to the wild bird, and a shelter to the wild cattle, at a time when such were the only intruders upon its hospitality; and when the country, for miles and leagues round, was honoured by as little of man's care and cultivation as was at present the rank waste which still nourished the gnarled and vener-

able roots of that single tree. There was something remarkably singular and grotesque in the shape and sinuosity of its naked and spectral branches; two of exceeding length stretched themselves forth, in the very semblance of arms held out in the attitude of supplication; and the bend of the trunk over the desolate pond, the form of the hoary and blasted summit, and the hollow trunk half riven asunder in the shape of limbs, seemed to favour the gigantic deception. You might have imagined it an antediluvian transformation, or a daughter of the Titan race, preserving, in her metamorphosis, her attitude of eutreaty to the merciless Olympian.

This was the only tree visible; for a turn of the road, and the unevenness of the ground, completely veiled the house we had passed, and the few low firs and sycamores which made its only plantations. The sullen pool—its ghost-like guardian—the dreary heath around, the rude features of the country beyond, and the apparent absence of all human habitation, conspired to make a scene of the most dispiriting and striking desolation. I know not how to account for it, but, as I gazed around in silence, the whole place appeared to grow over my mind as one which I had seen, though dimly and drearily, as in a dream, before, and a nameless and unaccountable presentiment of fear and evil sank like ice into my heart. We ascended the hill, and, the rest of the road being of a kind better adapted to expedition, we mended our pace and soon arrived at the goal of our journey.

The race-ground had its customary complement of knaves and fools—the dupers and the duped. Poor Lady Chester, who had proceeded to the ground by the high road (for the way we had chosen was inaccessible to those who ride in chariots, and whose charioteers are set up in high places,) was driving to and fro, the very picture

of cold and discomfort ; and the few solitary carriages which honoured the course, looked as miserable as if they were witnessing the funeral of their owners' persons, rather than the peril of their characters and purses.

As we rode along to the betting-post, Sir John Tyrrell passed us : Lord Chester accosted him familiarly, and the baronet joined us. He had been an old votary of the turf in his younger days, and he still preserved all his ancient predilection in its favour.

It seemed that Chester had not met him for many years, and after a short and characteristic conversation of " God bless me, how long since I saw you !—good horse you're on ;—you look thin ;—admirable condition ;—what have you been doing ?—grand action ;—a'n't we behind hand ?—famous fore-hand ;—recollect old Queensbury ?—hot in the mouth ;—gone to the devil ;—what are the odds ?" Lord Chester asked Tyrrell to go home with us. The invitation was readily accepted.

" With impotence of will

We wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose
Round us, and round each other."*

Now, then, arose the noise, the clatter, the swearing, the lying, the perjury, the cheating, the crowd, the bustle, the hurry, the rush, the heat, the ardour, the impatience, the hope, the terror, the rapture, the agony of the RACE. The instant the first heat was over, one asked me one thing, one bellowed another ; I fled to Lord Chester ; he did not heed me. I took refuge with the marchioness ; she was as sullen as an east wind could make her. Lady Harriet would talk of nothing but the horses : Sir Lionel would not talk at all. I was in the lowest pit of despondency, and the

devils that kept me there were as blue as Lady Chester's nose. Silent, sad, sorrowful, and sulky, I rode away from the crowd, and moralised on its vicious propensities. One grows marvellously honest when the species of cheating before us is not suited to one's self. Fortunately, my better angel reminded me, that about the distance of three miles from the course lived an old college friend, blessed, since we had met, with a parsonage and a wife. I knew his tastes too well to imagine that any allurements of an equestrian nature could have seduced him from the ease of his library and the dignity of his books ; and hoping, therefore, that I should find him at home, I turned my horse's head in an opposite direction, and, rejoiced at the idea of my escape, bade adieu to the course.

As I cantered across the far end of the heath, my horse started from an object upon the ground ; it was a man wrapped from head to foot in a long horseman's cloak, and so well guarded as to the face, from the raw inclemency of the day, that I could not catch even a glimpse of the features, through the hat and neck-shawl which concealed them. The head was turned, with apparent anxiety, towards the distant throng ; and imagining the man belonging to the lower orders, with whom I am always familiar, I addressed to him, *en passant*, some trifling remark on the event of the race. He made no answer. There was something about him which induced me to look back several moments after I had left him behind. He had not moved an inch. There is such a certain uncomfortableness always occasioned to the mind by stillness and mystery united, that even the disguising garb, and motionless silence of the man, innocent as I thought they must have been, impressed themselves disagreeably on my meditations as I rode briskly on.

It is my maxim never to be unpleas- amused myself with wondering how
 antly employed, even in thought, if matrimony and clerical dignity sat
 I can help it; accordingly I changed on the indolent shoulders of my old
 the course of my reflection, and acquaintance.

CHAPTER LXIII.

And as for me, tho' that I can but lite
 On bookes for me to read, I me delight,
 And to hem give I faith and full credence,
 And in mine heart have hem in reverence,
 So heartily that there is gamè none.
 That fro' my bookes maketh me to gone.—CHAUCER

CHRISTOPHER CLUTTERBUCK was a common individual of a common order, but little known in this busy and toiling world. I cannot flatter myself that I am about to present to your notice that *rara avis*, a new character—yet there is something interesting, and even unhackneyed, in the retired and simple class to which he belongs: and before I proceed to a darker period in my memoirs, I feel a calm and tranquillising pleasure in the rest which a brief and imperfect delineation of my college companion affords me. My friend came up to the University with the learning which one about to quit the world might, with credit, have boasted of possessing, and the simplicity which one about to enter it would have been ashamed to confess. Quiet and shy, in his habits and his manners, he was never seen out of the precincts of his apartment, except in obedience to the stated calls of dinner, lectures, and chapel. Then his small and stooping form might be marked, crossing the quadrangle with a hurried step, and cautiously avoiding the smallest blade of the barren grass-plots, which are forbidden ground to the feet of all the lower orders of the collegiate oligarchy. Many were the smiles and the jeers, from the worse natured and better appointed students, who

loitered idly along the court, at the rude garb and saturnine appearance of the humble under-graduate; and the calm countenance of the grave, but amiable man, who then bore the honour and *onus* of mathematical lecturer at our college, would soften into a glance of mingled approbation and pity, as he noted the eagerness which spoke from the wan cheek and emaciated frame of the ablest of his pupils, hurrying—after each legitimate interruption—to the enjoyment of the crabbed characters and worm-worn volumes, which contained for him all the seductions of pleasure, and all the temptations of youth.

It is a melancholy thing, which none but those educated at a college can understand, to see the debilitated frames of the aspirants for academical honours; to mark the prime—the verdure—the glory—the life—of life wasted irrevocably away in a *labor ineptiarum*, which brings no harvest either to others or themselves. For the poet, the philosopher, the man of science, we can appreciate the recompense if we commiserate the sacrifice; from the darkness of their retreat there goes a light—from the silence of their studies there issues a voice, to illumine or convince. We can imagine them looking from their privations to the far visions of the

future, and hugging to their hearts, in the strength of no unnatural vanity, the reward which their labours are certain hereafter to obtain. To those who can anticipate the vast dominions of immortality among men, what boots the sterility of the cabined and petty *present*? But the mere man of languages and learning—the machine of a memory heavily but unprofitably employed—the Columbus wasting at the galley oar the energies which should have discovered a world—for him there is no day-dream of the future, no grasp at the immortality of fame. Beyond the walls of his narrow room he knows no object; beyond the elucidation of a dead tongue he indulges no ambition; his life is one long school-day of lexicons and grammars—a Fabric of Ice, cautiously excluded from a single sun-beam—elaborately useless, ingeniously unprofitable; and leaving, at the moment it melts away, not a single trace of the space it occupied, or the labour it cost.

At the time I went to the University, my poor collegian had attained all the honours his employment could ever procure him. *He had been* a Pitt scholar; *he was* a senior wrangler, and a Fellow of his college. It often happened that I found myself next to him at dinner, and I was struck by his abstinence, and pleased with his modesty, despite the *gaucherie* of his manner, and the fashion of his garb. By degrees I insinuated myself into his acquaintance; and as I had always some love of scholastic lore, I took frequent opportunities of conversing with him upon Horace, and consulting him upon Lucian.

Many a dim twilight have we sat together, reviving each other's recollection, and occasionally relaxing into the grave amusement of *capping verses*. Then, if by any chance my ingenuity or memory enabled me to puzzle my companion, his good tem-

per would lose itself in a quaint pettishness, or he would hurl against me some line of Aristophanes, and ask me, with a raised voice, and arched brow, to give him a fitting answer *to that*. But if, as was much more frequently the case, he fairly ran me down into a pause and confession of inability, he would rub his hands with a strange chuckle, and offer me, in the bounteousness of his heart, to read aloud a Greek Ode of his own, while he treated me "to a dish of tea." There was much in the good man's innocence, and guilelessness of soul, which made me love him, and I did not rest till I had procured him, before I left the University, the living which he now held. Since then, he had married the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman, an event of which he had duly informed me; but, though this great step in the life of "a reading man" had not taken place many months since, I had completely, after a hearty wish for his domestic happiness, consigned it to a dormant place in my recollection.

The house which I now began to approach was small, but comfortable; perhaps there was something melancholy in the old-fashioned hedges, cut and trimmed with mathematical precision, which surrounded the glebe, as well as in the heavy architecture and dingy bricks of the reverend recluse's habitation. To make amends for this, there was also something peculiarly still and placid about the appearance of the house, which must have suited well the tastes and habits of the owner. A small, formal lawn was adorned with a square fish-pond, bricked round, and covered with the green weepings of four willows, which drooped over it from their station at each corner. At the opposite side of this Pierian reservoir, was a hermitage, or arbour of laurels, shaped in the stiff rusticity of the Dutch school, in the prevalence of which it was

probably planted; behind this arbour, the ground, after a slight railing, terminated in an orchard.

The sound I elicited from the gate bell seemed to ring through that retired place with singular shrillness; and I observed at the opposite window, all that bustle of drawing curtains, peeping faces, and hasty retreats, which denote female anxiety and perplexity, at the unexpected approach of a stranger.

After some time the parson's single servant, a middle-aged, slovenly man, in a loose frock, and grey kerseymere nondescripts, opened the gate, and informed me that his master *was* at home. With a few earnest admonitions to my admitter—who was, like the domestics of many richer men, both groom and valet—respecting the safety of my borrowed horse, I entered the house: the servant did not think it necessary to inquire my name, but threw open the door of the study, with the brief introduction of—“A gentleman, sir.”

Clutterbuck was standing, with his back towards me, upon a pair of library steps, turning over some dusky volumes; and below stood a pale, cadaverous youth, with a set and serious countenance, that bore no small likeness to Clutterbuck himself.

“*Mon Dieu*,” thought I, “he cannot have made such good use of his matrimonial state as to have raised this lanky impression of himself in the space of seven months!” The good man turned round, and almost fell off the steps with the nervous shock of beholding me so near him; he descended with precipitation, and shook me so warmly and tightly by the hand, that he brought tears into my eyes, as well as his own.

“Gently, my good friend,” said I—“*purce, pr'cor*, or you will force me to say, ‘*ibimus unâ anbo, flentes valido connexi fœdere*’”

Clutterbuck's eyes watered still more, when he heard the grateful sounds of what to him was the mother tongue. He surveyed me from head to foot with an air of benign and fatherly complacency, and dragging forth from its sullen rest a large arm-chair, on whose cushions of rusty horse-hair sat an eternal cloud of classic dust, too sacred to be disturbed, he *plumped* me down upon it, before I was aware of the cruel hospitality.

“Oh! my nethergarments,” thought I. “*Quantus sudor incrit Bedoso*, to restore you to your pristine purity!”

“But, whence come you?” said my host, who cherished rather a formal and antiquated method of speech.

“From the Pythian games,” said I; “the campus hight Newmarket. Do I see right, or is not yon *insignis juvenis* marvellously like you? Of a surety he rivals the Titans, if he is only a seven months' child!”

“Now, truly, my worthy friend,” answered Clutterbuck, “you indulge in jesting! The boy is my nephew, a goodly child, and a painstaking. I hope he will thrive at our gentle mother. He goes to Trinity next October. Benjamin Jeremiah, my lad, this is my worthy friend and benefactor, of whom I have often spoken; go, and order him of our best—he will partake of our repast!”

“No, really,” I began; but Clutterbuck gently placed the hand, whose strength of affection I had already so forcibly experienced, upon my mouth. “Pardon me, my friend,” said he. “No *stranger* should depart till he had broken bread with us; how much more then a friend! Go, Benjamin Jeremiah, and tell your aunt that Mr. Peilham will dine with us; and order, furthermore, that the barrel of oysters sent unto us as a present, by my worthy friend Dr. Swallow'em, be dressed in the fashion that seemeth

best ; they are a classic dainty, and we shall think of our great masters the ancients whilst we devour them. And—stop, Benjamin Jeremiah, see that we have the wine with the black seal ; and — now — go, Benjamin Jeremiah !”

“ Well, my old friend,” said I, when the door closed upon the sallow and smileless nephew, “ how do you love the connubial yoke ? Do you give the same advice as Socrates ! I hope, at least, it is not from the same experience.”

“ Hem !” answered the grave Christopher, in a tone that struck me as somewhat nervous and uneasy, “ you are become quite a humourist since we parted. I suppose you have been warming your wit by the lambent fires of Horace and Aristophanes !”

“ No,” said I, “ the living allow those whose toilsome lot it is to mix constantly with them, but little time to study the monuments of the dead. But, in sober earnest, are you as happy as I wish you ?”

Clutterbuck looked down for a moment, and then, turning towards the table, laid one hand upon a manuscript, and pointed with the other to his books. “ With this society,” said he, “ how can I be otherwise ?”

I gave him no reply, but put my hand upon his manuscript. He made a modest and coy effort to detain it, but I knew that writers were like women, and, making use of no displeasing force, I possessed myself of the paper.

It was a treatise on the Greek participle. My heart sickened within me ; but, as I caught the eager glance of the poor author, I brightened up my countenance into an expression of pleasure, and appeared to read and comment upon the *difficiles nuge* with an interest commensurate to his own. Meanwhile the youth returned.

We had much of that delicacy of

sentiment which always accompanies mental cultivation, of whatever sort it may be. He went, with a scarlet blush over his thin face, to his uncle, and whispered something in his ear, which, from the angry embarrassment it appeared to occasion, I was at no loss to divine.

“ Come,” said I, “ we are too long acquainted for ceremony. Your *placens uxor*, like all ladies in the same predicament, thinks your invitation a little unadvised ; and, in real earnest, I have so long a ride to perform, that I would rather eat your oysters another day !”

“ No, no,” said Clutterbuck, with greater eagerness than his even temperament was often hurried into betraying—“ no, I will go and reason with her myself. ‘ Wives, obey your husbands,’ saith the preacher !” And the quondam senior wrangler almost upset his chair in the perturbation with which he arose from it.

I laid my hand upon him. “ Let me go myself,” said I, “ since you *will* have me dine with you. ‘ The sex is ever to a *stranger* kind,’ and I shall probably be more persuasive than you, in despite of your legitimate authority.”

So saying, I left the room, with a curiosity more painful than pleasing, to see the collegian’s wife. I arrested the man servant, and ordered him to usher and announce me.

I was led *instantly* into the apartment where I had discovered all the signs of female inquisitiveness, which I have before detailed. There I discovered a small woman, in a robe equally slatternly and fine, with a sharp pointed nose, small, cold, grey eyes, and a complexion high towards the cheek bones, but waxing of a light green before it reached the wide and querulous mouth, which, well I ween, seldom opened to smile upon the unfortunate possessor of her charms. She, like the Rev. Christopher, was

not without her companions; a tall meagre woman, of advanced age, and a girl, some years younger than herself, were introduced to me as her mother and sister.

My *entré* occasioned no little confusion, but I knew well how to remedy that. I held out my hand so cordially to the wife, that I enticed, though with evident reluctance, two of my fingers into my own, which I did not dismiss without a most mollifying and affectionate squeeze; and drawing my chair close towards her, began conversing as familiarly as if I had known the whole trial for years. I declared my joy at seeing my old friend so happily settled—commented on the improvement of his looks—ventured a sly joke at the good effects of matrimony—praised a cat couchant, worked in worsted by the venerable hand of the eldest matron—offered to procure her a *real* cat of the true Persian breed, black ears four inches long, with a tail like a squirrel's; and then slid, all at once, into the unauthorised invitation of the good man of the house.

"Clutterbuck," said I, "has asked me very warmly to stay dinner; but, before I accepted his offer, I insisted upon coming to see how far it was confirmed by you. Gentlemen, you are aware, my dear Madam, know nothing of these matters, and I never accept a married man's invitation till it has the sanction of his lady; I have an example of that at home. My mother (Lady Frances) is the best-tempered woman in the world: but my father could no more take the liberty (for I may truly call it such) to ask even his oldest friend to dinner, without consulting the mistress of the house, than he could think of flying. No one (says my mother, and she says what is very true), can tell about the household affairs, but those who have the management of them: and in pursuance of this aphorism, I dare not

accept any invitation in this house, except from its mistress."

"Really," said Mrs. Clutterbuck, colouring, with mingled embarrassment and gratification, "you are very considerate and polite, Mr. Pelham: I only wish Mr. Clutterbuck paid half your attention to these things; nobody can tell the trouble and inconvenience he puts me to. If I *had* known, a little time before, that you were coming—but now I fear we have nothing in the house; but if you can partake of our fare, such as it is, Mr. Pelham—"

"Your kindness enchants me," I exclaimed, "and I no longer scruple to confess the pleasure I have in accepting my old friend's offer."

This affair being settled, I continued to converse for some minutes with as much vivacity as I could summon to my aid, and when I went once more to the library, it was with the comfortable impression of having left those as friends, whom I had visited as foes.

The dinner hour was four, and, till it came, Clutterbuck and I amused ourselves "in commune wise and sage." There was something high in the sentiments and generous in the feelings of this man, which made me the more regret the bias of mind which rendered them so unavailing. At college he had never (*illis dissimilis in nostro tempore natis*!) cringed to the possessors of clerical power. In the duties of his station as dean of the college, he was equally strict to the black cap and the lordly hat. Nay, when one of his private pupils, whose father was possessed of more church preferment than any nobleman in the peerage, disobeyed his repeated summons, and constantly neglected to attend his instructions, he sent for him, resigned his tuition, and refused any longer to accept a salary which the negligence of his pupil would not allow him to requite.

In his clerical tenets he was high : in his judgment of others he was mild. His knowledge of the liberty of Greece was not drawn from the ignorant historian of her Republics ;* nor did he find in the contemplative mildness and gentle philosophy of the ancients, nothing but a sanction for modern bigotry and existing abuses.

It was a remarkable trait in his conversation, that though he indulged in many references to the old authors, and allusions to classic customs, he never deviated into the innumerable quotations with which his memory was stored. No words, in spite of all the quaintness and antiquity of his dialect, purely Latin or Greek, ever escaped his lips, except in our engagements at capping verses, or when he was allured into accepting a challenge of learning from some of its pretenders ; then, indeed, he could pour forth such a torrent of authorities as effectually silenced his opponent ; but these contests were rarely entered into, and these triumphs moderately indulged. Yet he loved the use of quotations in others, and I knew the greatest pleasure I could give him was in the frequent use of them. Perhaps he thought it would seem like an empty parade of learning in one who so confessedly possessed it, to deal in the strange words of another tongue, and consequently rejected them, while, with an innocent inconsistency, characteristic of the man, it never occurred to him that there was any thing either in the quaintness of his dialect or the occupations of his leisure, which might subject him to the same imputation of pedantry.

And yet, at times, when he warmed

in his subject, there was a tone in his language as well as sentiment, which might not be improperly termed eloquent ; and the real modesty and quiet enthusiasm of his nature, took away, from the impression he made, the feeling of pomposity and affectation with which otherwise he might have inspired you.

"You have a calm and quiet habitation here," said I ; "the very nooks seem to have something lulling in that venerable caw which it always does me such good to hear."

"Yes," answered Clutterbuck, "I own that there is much that is grateful to the temper of my mind in this retired spot. I fancy that I can the better give myself up to the contemplation which makes, as it were, my intellectual element and food. And yet I dare say that in this (as in all other things) I do strangely err ; for I remember that during my only sojourn in London, I was wont to feel the sound of wheels and of the throng of steps shake the windows of my lodging in the Strand, as if it were but a warning to recall my mind more closely to its studies :—of a verity that noisy evidence of man's labour reminded me how little the great interests of this rolling world were to me, and the feeling of solitude amongst the crowds without, made me cling more fondly to the company I found within. For it seems that the mind is ever addicted to contraries, and that when it be transplanted into a soil where all its neighbours do produce a certain fruit, it doth, from a strange perversity, bring forth one of a different sort. You would little believe, my honoured friend, that in this lonely seclusion, I cannot at all times prohibit my thoughts from wandering to that gay world of London, which, during my tarry therein, occupied them in so partial a degree. You smile, my friend, nevertheless it is true ; and when you reflect that I

* It is really a disgrace to our University, that any of its colleges should accept as a reference, or even tolerate as an authority, the presumptuous bigot who has bequeathed to us, in his History of Greece, the masterpiece of a declaimer without energy, and of a pedant without learning.

dwelt in the western department of the metropolis, near unto the noble mansion of Somerset House, and consequently in the very centre of what the idle call Fashion, you will not be so surprised at the occasional migration of my thoughts."

Here the worthy Clutterbuck paused and sighed slightly. "Do you farm, or cultivate your garden," said I; "they are no ignoble nor unclassical employments?"

"Unhappily," answered Clutterbuck, "I am inclined to neither; my chest pains me with a sharp and piercing pang when I attempt to stoop, and my respiration is short and asthmatic; and, in truth, I seldom love to stir from my books and papers. I go with Pliny to his garden, and with Virgil to his farm; those mental excursions are the sole ones I indulge in: and when I think of my appetite for application, and my love of idleness, I am tempted to wax proud of the propensities which reverse the censure of Tacitus on our German ancestors, and incline so fondly to quiet, while they turn so restlessly from sloth."

Here the speaker was interrupted by a long, low, dry cough, which penetrated me to the heart. "Alas!" thought I, as I heard it, and looked upon my poor friend's hectic and hollow cheek, "it is not only his mind that will be the victim to the fatality of his studies."

It was some moments before I renewed the conversation, and I had scarcely done so before I was interrupted by the entrance of Benjamin Jeremiah, with a message from his aunt that dinner would be ready in a few minutes. Another long whisper to Christopher succeeded. The *cidevant* fellow of Trinity looked down at his garments with a perplexed air. I saw at once that he had received a hint on the propriety of a change of raiment. To give him due leisure

for this, I asked the youth to show me a room in which I might perform the usual ablutions previous to dinner, and followed him up stairs to a comfortable sort of dressing-room, without a fire-place, where I found a yellow-ware jug and basin, and a towel, of so coarse a buckaback, that I did not dare adventure its rough texture next my complexion—my skin is not made for such rude fellowship. While I was tenderly and daintily anointing my hands with some hard water, of no Blandusian spring, and that vile composition entitled Windsor soap, I heard the difficult breathing of poor Clutterbuck on the stairs, and soon after he entered the adjacent room. Two minutes more, and his servant joined him, for I heard the rough voice of the domestic say, "There is no more of the wine with the black seal left, sir!"

"No more, good Dixon? you mistake grievously. I had two dozen not a week since."

"Don't know, I'm sure, sir!" answered Dixon, with a careless and half impertinent accent; "but there are great things, *like alligators*, in the cellar, which break all the bottles!"

"Alligators in my cellar!" said the astonished Clutterbuck.

"Yes, sir—at least a venomous sort of reptile like them, which the people about here call *fls*!"

"What!" said Clutterbuck, innocently, and evidently not seeing the irony of his own question; "What! have the efts broken two dozen bottles in a week? Of an exceeding surety, it is strange that a little creature of the lizard species should be so destructive—perchance they have an antipathy to the vinous smell; I will confer with my learned friend, Dr. Dissectall, touching their strength and *habits*. Bring up some of the port, then, good Dixon."

"Yes, sir. All the corn is out; I had none for the gentleman's horse."

"Why, Dixon, my memory fails me strangely, or I paid you the sum of four pounds odd shillings for corn on Friday last."

"Yes, sir: but your cow and the chickens eat so much; and then blind Dobbin has four feeds a-day, and Farmer Johnson always puts his horse in our stable, and Mrs. Clutterbuck and the ladies fed the jackass the other day in the hired doukey-chaise; besides, the rats and mice are always at it."

"It is a marvel unto me," answered Clutterbuck, "how detrimental the vermin race are; they seem to have noted my poor possessions as their especial prey; remind me that I write to Dr. Dissectall to-morrow, good Dixon."

"Yes, sir; and now I think of it—" But here Mr. Dixon was cut short in his items, by the entrance of a third person, who proved to be Mrs. Clutterbuck.

"What, not dressed yet, Mr. Clutterbuck; what a dawdler you are!—and do look—was ever woman so used? You have wiped your razor upon my nightcap—you dirty, slovenly —."

"I crave you many pardons; I own my error!" said Clutterbuck, in a nervous tone of interruption.

"Error, indeed!" cried Mrs. Clutterbuck, in a sharp, overstretched, querulous falsetto, suited to the occasion: "but this is always the case—I am sure, my poor temper is tried to the utmost—and Lord help thee, idiot! you have thrust those spindle legs of yours into your coat-sleeves instead of your breeches!"

"Of a truth, good wife, your eyes are more discerning than mine; and my legs, which are, as you say, somewhat thin, have indured themselves in what appertaineth not unto them; but for all that, Dorothea, I am not deserving of the epithet of idiot, with which you have been pleased to favour

me; although my humble faculties are, indeed, of no eminent or surpassing order—"

"Pooh! pooh! Mr. Clutterbuck, I am sure, I don't know what else you are, muddling your head all day with those good-for-nothing books. And now do tell me, how you could think of asking Mr. Pelham to dinner, when you knew we had nothing in the world but hashed mutton and an apple-pudding? Is that the way, sir, you disgrace your wife, after her condensation in marrying you?"

"Really," answered the patient Clutterbuck, "I was forgetful of those matters; but my friend cares as little as myself about the grosser tastes of the table; and the feast of intellectual converse is all that he desires in his brief sojourn beneath our roof."

"Feast of fiddlesticks, Mr. Clutterbuck! did ever man talk such nonsense?"

"Besides," rejoined the *master* of the house, unheeding this interruption, "we have a luxury even of the palate, than which there are none more delicate, and unto which he, as well as myself, is, I know, somewhat unphilosophically given; I speak of the oysters, sent here by our good friend, Dr. Swallow'em."

"What do you mean, Mr. Clutterbuck? My poor mother and I had those oysters last night for our supper. I am sure she, and my sister, are almost starved; but you are always wanting to be pampered up above us all."

"Nay, nay," answered Clutterbuck, "you know you accuse me wrongfully, Dorothea; but now I think of it, would it not be better to modulate the tone of our conversation, seeing that our guest (a circumstance which until now quite escaped my recollection) was shown into the next room, for the purpose of washing his hands, the which, from their notable cleanliness, seemed to me wholly unneces-

sary. I would not have him overhear you, Dorothea, lest his kind heart should imagine me less happy than—than—it wishes me!”

“Good God, Mr. Clutterbuck!” were the only words I heard farther: and with tears in my eyes, and a suffocating feeling in my throat, for the matrimonial situation of my unfortunate friend, I descended into the drawing-room. The only one yet there was the pale nephew: he was bending painfully over a book; I took it from him; it was “Bentley upon Phalaris.” I could scarcely refrain from throwing it into the fire—“another victim!” thought I.—Oh, the curse of an English education!

By and by, down came the mother and the sister, then Clutterbuck, and lastly, bedizened out with gew-gaws and trumpery,—the wife. Born and nurtured as I was in the art of the *volto sciolto, pensieri stretti*,* I had seldom found a more arduous task of dissimulation than that which I experienced now. However, the hope to benefit my friend's situation assisted me: the best way, I thought, of obtaining him more respect from his wife, will be by showing her the respect he meets with from others: accordingly, I sat down by her, and having first conciliated her attention by some of that coin, termed compliments, in which there is no counterfeit that does not have the universal effect of real, I spoke with the most profound veneration of the talents and learning of Clutterbuck—I dilated upon the high reputation he enjoyed—upon the general esteem in which he was held—upon the kindness of his heart—the sincerity of his modesty—the integrity of his honour—in short, whatever I thought likely to affect her; most of all, I insisted upon the high panegyrics bestowed

upon him, by Lord this, and the Earl that, and wound up, with adding that I was certain he would die a bishop. My eloquence had its effect; all dinner time, Mrs. Clutterbuck treated her husband with even striking consideration: my words seemed to have gifted her with a new light, and to have wrought a thorough transformation in her view of her lord and master's character. Who knows not the truth, that we have dim and short-sighted eyes to estimate the nature of our own kin, and that we borrow the spectacles which alone enable us to discern their merits or their failings from the opinion of strangers! It may be readily supposed that the dinner did not pass without its share of the ludicrous—that the waiter and the dishes, the family and the host, would have afforded ample materials no less for the student of nature in Hogarth, than of caricature in Bunbury; but I was too seriously occupied in pursuing my object, and marking its success, to have time even for a smile. Ah! if ever you would allure your son to diplomacy, show him how subservient he may make it to benevolence.

When the women had retired, we drew our chairs near to each other, and, laying down my watch on the table, as I looked out upon the declining day, I said, “Let us make the best of our time; I can only linger here one half hour longer.”

“And how, my friend,” said Clutterbuck, “shall we learn the method of making the best use of time? *there*, whether it be in the larger segments, or the petty subdivisions of our life, rests the great enigma of our being. Who is there that has ever exclaimed—(pardon my pedantry, I am for once *driven* into Greek)—*Eureka!* to this most difficult of the sciences?”

“Come,” said I, “it is not for you, the favoured scholar—the honoured academician—whose hours are never

* The open countenance and closed thoughts.

idly employed, to ask this question !”

“Your friendship makes too flattering the acumen of your judgment,” answered the modest Clutterbuck. “It has indeed been my lot to cultivate the fields of truth, as transmitted unto our hands by the wise men of old ; and I have much to be thankful for, that I have, in the employ, been neither curtailed in my leisure, nor abased in my independence—the two great goods of a calm and meditative mind ; yet are there moments in which I am led to doubt of the wisdom of my pursuits : and when, with a feverish and shaking hand, I put aside the books which have detained me from my rest till the morning hour, and repair unto a couch often baffled of slumber by the pains and discomforts of this worn and feeble frame, I almost wish I could purchase the rude health of the peasant by the exchange of an idle and imperfect learning for the ignorance, content with the narrow world it possesses, because unconscious of the limitless creation beyond. Yet, my dear and esteemed friend, there is a dignified and tranquillising philosophy in the writings of the ancients which ought to teach me a better condition of mind : and when I have risen from the lofty, albeit, somewhat melancholy strain, which swells through the essays of the graceful and tender Cicero, I have indeed felt a momentary satisfaction at my studies, and an elation even at the petty success with which I have cherished them. But these are brief and fleeting moments, and deserve chastisement for their pride. There is one thing, my Pelham, which has grieved me bitterly of late, and that is, that in the earnest attention which it is the—perhaps fastidious—custom of our University, to pay to the minutæ of classic lore, I do now oftentimes lose the spirit and beauty

of the general bearing ; nay, I derive a far greater pleasure from the ingenious amendment of a perverted text, than from all the turn and thought of the sense itself : while I am straightening a crooked nail in the wine-cask, I suffer the wine to evaporate ; but to this I am somewhat reconciled, when I reflect that it was also the misfortune of the great Porson, and the elaborate Parr, men with whom I blush to find myself included in the same sentence.”

“My friend,” said I, “I wish neither to wound your modesty, nor to impugn your pursuits ; but think you not that it would be better, both for men and for yourself, if, while you are yet in the vigour of your age and reason, you occupy your ingenuity and application in some more useful and lofty work, than that which you suffered me to glance at in your library ; and, moreover, as the great object of him who would perfect his mind, is first to strengthen the faculties of his body, would it not be prudent in you to lessen for a time your devotion to books ; to exercise yourself in the fresh air—to relax the bow, by loosing the string ; to mix more with the living, and impart to men in conversation, as well as in writing, whatever the incessant labour of many years may have hoarded ? Come, if not to town, at least to its vicinity ; the profits of your living, if even tolerably managed, will enable you to do so without inconvenience. Leave your books to their shelves, and your flock to their curate, and—you shake your head—do I displease you ?”

“No, no, my kind and generous adviser ;—but as the twig was set, the tree must grow. I have not been without that ambition which, however vain and sinful, is the first passion to enter the wayward and tossing vessel of our soul, and the last to leave its stranded and shattered wreck ; but mine found and attained its object at

an age when in others it is, as yet, a vague and unsettled feeling; and it feeds now rather upon the recollections of what has been, than ventures forward on a sea of untried and strange expectation. As for my studies! how can you, who have, and in no moderate draught, drunk of the old stream of Castaly,—how can *you* ask me *now* to change them? Are not the ancients my food, my aliment, my solace in sorrow—my sympathisers, my very benefactors, in joy? Take them away from me, and you take away the very winds which purify and give motion to the obscure and silent current of my life. Besides, my Pelham, it cannot have escaped your observation, that there is little in my present state which promises a long increase of days: the few that remain to me must glide away like their predecessors; and whatever be the infirmities of my body, and the little harassments which, I am led to suspect, do occasionally molest the most fortunate, who link themselves unto the unstable and fluctuating part of creation, which we term women, more especially in an hymeneal capacity—whatever these may be, I have my refuge and my comforter in the golden-souled and dreaming Plato, and the sententious wisdom of the less *imaginative* Seneca. Nor,

when I am reminded of my approaching dissolution by the symptoms which do mostly at the midnight hour press themselves upon me, is there a small and inglorious pleasure in the hope that I may meet, hereafter, in those Islands of the Blest which they dimly dreamt of, but which are opened unto *my* vision, without a cloud, or mist, or shadow of uncertainty and doubt, with those bright spirits which we do now converse with so imperfectly; that I may catch from the very lips of Homer, the unclouded gorgeousness of fiction, and from the accents of Archimedes, the unadulterated calculations of truth!"

Clutterbuck ceased; and the glow of his enthusiasm diffused itself over his sunken eye and consumptive cheek. The boy, who had sat apart, and silent, during our discourse, laid his head upon the table, and sobbed audibly; and I rose, deeply affected, to offer to one for whom they were indeed, unavailing, the wishes and blessing of an eager, but not hardened disciple of the world. We parted: on this earth we can never meet again. The light has wasted itself away beneath the bushel. It will be six weeks to-morrow since the meek and noble-minded academician breathed his last.

CHAPTER LXIV.

'Tis but a single murder.—LILLO'S Fatal Curiosity

It was in a melancholy and thoughtful mood that I rode away from the parsonage. Numerous and hearty were the maledictions I bestowed upon a system of education which, while it was so ineffective with the many, was so pernicious to the few. Miserable delusion (thought I), that encourages the ruin of health and the perversion of intellect, by studies that are as unprofitable to the world as they are destructive to the possessor—that incapacitate him for public, and unfit him for private, life;—and that, while they expose him to the ridicule of strangers, render him the victim of his wife, and the prey of his domestic!

Busied in such reflections, I rode quickly on, till I found myself, once more, on the heath. I looked anxiously round for the conspicuous equipage of Lady Chester, but in vain: the ground was thin—nearly all the higher orders had retired: the common people, grouped together, and clamouring noisily, were withdrawing: and the shrill voices of the itinerant hawkers of cards and bills had, at length, subsided into silence. I rode over the ground, in the hope of finding some solitary straggler of our party. Alas! there was not one; and, with much reluctance at, and distaste to, my lonely retreat, I turned in a homeward direction from the course.

The evening had already set in, but there was a moon in the cold grey sky, that I could almost have thanked, in a sonnet, for a light which I felt was never more welcomingly dispensed, when I thought of the cross roads

and dreary country I had to pass before I reached the longed-for haven of Chester Park. After I had left the direct road, the wind, which had before been piercingly keen, fell, and I perceived a dark cloud behind, which began slowly to overtake my steps. I care little, in general, for the discomfort of a shower; yet, as when we are in one misfortune we always exaggerate the consequence of a new one, I looked upon my dark pursuer with a very impatient and petulant frown, and set my horse on a trot, much more suitable to my inclination than his own. Indeed, he seemed fully alive to the cornless state of the parson's stable, and evinced his sense of the circumstance by a very languid mode of progression, and a constant attempt, whenever his pace abated, and I suffered the rein to slumber upon his neck, to crop the rank grass that sprang up on either side of our road. I had proceeded about three miles on my way, when I heard the clatter of hoofs behind me. My even pace soon suffered me to be overtaken; and, as the stranger checked his horse, when he was nearly by my side, I turned towards him, and beheld Sir John Tyrrell.

"Well," said he, "this is really fortunate; for I began to fear I should have my ride, this cold evening, entirely to myself."

"I imagined that you had long reached Chester Park by this time," said I. "Did not you leave the course with our party?"

"No," answered Tyrrell; "I had business, at Newmarket, with a rascally fellow of the name of Dawson.

He lost to me rather a considerable wager, and asked me to come to town with him after the race, in order to pay me. As he said he lived on the direct road to Chester Park, and would direct, and even accompany me through all the difficult part of the ride, I the less regretted not joining Chester and his party; and you know, Pelham, that when pleasure pulls one way, and money another, it is all over with the first. Well,—to return to my rascal—would you believe, that when we got to Newmarket, he left me at the inn, in order, he said, to fetch the money; and after having kept me in a cold room, with a smoky chimney, for more than an hour, without making his appearance, I sallied out into the town, and found Mr. Dawson quietly seated in a hell with that scoundrel Thornton, whom I did not conceive, till then, he was acquainted with. It seems that he was to win, at hazard, sufficient to pay his wager! You may fancy my anger, and the consequent increase to it, when he rose from the table, approached me, expressed his sorrow, d—d his ill luck, and informed me that he could not pay me for three months. You know that I could not ride home with such a fellow—he might have robbed me by the way—so I returned to my inn—dined—ordered my horse—set off—inquired my way of every passenger I passed, and after innumerable misdirections—here I am!”

“I cannot sympathise with you,” said I, “since I am benefited by your misfortunes. But do you think it very necessary to trot so fast? I fear my horse can scarcely keep up with yours.”

Tyrrell cast an impatient glance at my panting steed. “It is cursed unlucky you should be so badly mounted, and we shall have a pelting shower presently.”

In complaisance to Tyrrell, I endeavoured to accelerate my steed. The

roads were rough and stony; and I had scarcely got the tired animal into a sharp trot, before—whether or no by some wrench among the deep ruts and flinty causeway—he fell suddenly lame. The impetuosity of Tyrrell broke out in oaths, and we both dismounted to examine the cause of my horse’s hurt, in the hope that it might only be the intrusion of some pebble between the shoe and the hoof. While we were yet investigating the cause of our misfortune, two men on horseback overtook us. Tyrrell looked up. “By Heaven,” said he, in a low tone, “it’s that dog Dawson, and his worthy coadjutor, Tom Thornton.”

“What’s the matter, gentlemen?” cried the bluff voice of the latter. “Can I be of any assistance?” and without waiting our reply, he dismounted, and came up to us. He had no sooner felt the horse’s leg, than he assured us it was a most severe strain, and that the utmost I could effect would be to walk the brute gently home.

As Tyrrell broke out into impatient violence at this speech, the sharper looked up at him with an expression of countenance I by no means liked, but in a very civil, and even respectful tone, said, “If you wish, Sir John, to reach Chester Park sooner than Mr. Pelham can possibly do, suppose you ride on with us; I will put you in the direct road before I quit you.” (Good breeding, thought I, to propose leaving me to find my own way through this labyrinth of ruts and stones!) However, Tyrrell, who was in a vile humour, refused the offer, in no very courteous manner; and added, that he should continue with me as long as he could, and did not doubt that when he left me he should be able to find his own way. Thornton pressed the invitation still closer, and even offered, *sotto voce*, to send Dawson on before, should the baronet object to his company.

“Pray, sir,” said Tyrrell, “leave

me alone, and busy yourself about your own affairs." After so tart a reply, Thornton thought it useless to say more; he remounted, and with a silent and swaggering nod of familiarity, soon rode away with his companion.

"I am sorry," said I, as we were slowly proceeding, "that you rejected Thornton's offer."

"Why, to say truth," answered Tyrrell, "I have so very bad an opinion of him, that I was almost afraid to trust myself in his company on so dreary a road. I have nearly (and he knows it), to the amount of two thousand pounds about me; for I was very fortunate in my betting-book to-day."

"I know nothing about racing regulations," said I; "but I thought one never paid sums of that amount upon the ground?"

"Ah!" answered Tyrrell, "but I won this sum, which is eighteen hundred pounds, of a country squire from Norfolk, who said he did not know when he should see me again, and insisted on paying me on the spot: 'faith I was not nice in the matter. Thornton was standing by at the time, and I did not half like the turn of his eye when he saw me put it up. Do you know, too,' continued Tyrrell, after a pause, "that I had a d—d fellow dodging me all day, and yesterday too; wherever I go, I am sure to see him. He seems constantly, though distantly, to follow me; and what is worse, he wraps himself up so well, and keeps at so cautious a distance, that I can never catch a glimpse of his face."

I know not why, but at that moment the recollection of the muffled figure I had seen upon the course, flashed upon me.

"Does he wear a long horseman's cloak?" said I.

"He does," answered Tyrrell, in surprise; "have you observed him?"

"I saw such a person on the race-

ground," replied I; "but only for an instant!"

Farther conversation was suspended by a few heavy drops which fell upon us; the cloud had passed over the moon, and was hastening rapidly and loweringly over our heads. Tyrrell was neither of an age, a frame, nor a temper, to be so indifferent to a hearty wetting as myself.

"Come, come," he cried, "you *must* put on that beast of yours—I can't get wet, for all the horses in the world."

I was not much pleased with the dictatorial tone of this remark. "It is impossible," said I, "especially as the horse is not my own, and seems considerably lamer than at first; but let me not detain you."

"Well!" cried Tyrrell, in a raised and angry voice, which pleased me still less than his former remark; "but how am I to find my way, if I leave you?"

"Keep straight on," said I, "for a mile farther, then a sign-post will direct you to the left; after a short time, you will have a steep hill to descend, at the bottom of which is a large pool, and a singularly shaped tree; then again, keep straight on, till you pass a house belonging to Mr. Dawson——"

"Hang it, Pelham, make haste!" exclaimed Tyrrell, impatiently, as the rain began now to descend fast and heavy.

"When you have passed that house," I resumed coolly, rather enjoying his petulance, "you must bear to the right for six miles, and you will be at Chester Park in less than an hour."

Tyrrell made no reply, but put spurs to his horse. The pattering rain and the angry heavens soon drowned the last echoes of the receding hoof-clang.

For myself, I looked in vain for a tree; not even a shrub was to be

found: the fields lay bare on either side, with no other partition but a dead hedge, and a deep dyke. "*Melius fit potentiâ*," &c., thought I, as Horace said, and Vincent *would* say; and in order to divert my thoughts from my situation, I turned them towards my diplomatic success with Lord Chester. Presently, for I think scarcely five minutes had elapsed since Tyrrell's departure, a horseman passed me at a sharp pace; the moon was hid by the dense cloud; and the night, though not wholly dark, was dim and obscured, so that I could only catch the outline of the flitting figure. A thrill of fear crept over me, when I saw that it was enveloped in a horseman's cloak. I soon rallied:—"There are more cloaks in the world than one," said I to myself; "besides, even if it be Tyrrell's dodger, as he calls him, the baronet is better mounted than any highwayman since the days of Du Val; and is, moreover, strong enough and cunning enough to take admirable care of himself." With this reflection I dismissed the occurrence from my thoughts, and once more returned to self-congratulations upon my own incomparable genius. "I shall now," I thought, "have well earned my seat in parliament: Dawton will indisputably be, if not the prime, the principal minister in rank and influence. He cannot fail to promote me for his own sake, as well as mine; and when I have once fairly got my legs in St. Stephen's, I shall soon have my hands in office: 'power,' says some one, 'is a snake that when it once finds a hole into which it can introduce its head, soon manages to wriggle in the rest of its body.'"

With such meditations I endeavoured to beguile the time, and cheat myself into forgetfulness of the lameness of my horse, and the dripping wetness of his rider. At last the storm began sullenly to subside: one impetuous torrent, ten-fold more vio-

lent than those that had preceded it, was followed by a momentary stillness, which was again broken by a short relapse of a less formidable severity, and, the moment it ceased, the beautiful moon broke out, the cloud rolled heavily away, and the sky shone forth, as fair and smiling as Lady—at a ball, after she has been beating her husband at home.

But at that instant, or perhaps a second before the storm ceased, I thought I heard the sound of a human cry. I paused, and my heart stood still—I could have heard a gnat hum: the sound was not repeated; my ear caught nothing but the plashing of the rain-drops from the dead hedges, and the murmur of the swollen dykes, as the waters pent within them rolled hurriedly on. By and by, an owl came suddenly from behind me, and screamed as it flapped across my path; that, too, went rapidly away: and with a smile, at what I deemed my own fancy, I renewed my journey. I soon came to the precipitous descent I have before mentioned; I dismounted, for safety, from my drooping and jaded horse, and led him down the hill. At a distance beyond I saw something dark moving on the grass which bordered the road; as I advanced, it started forth from the shadow, and fled rapidly before me, in the moonshine—it was a riderless horse. A chilling foreboding seized me: I looked round for some weapon, such as the hedge might afford; and finding a strong stick of tolerable weight and thickness, I proceeded more cautiously, but more fearlessly than before. As I wound down the hill, the moonlight fell full upon the remarkable and lonely tree I had observed in the morning. Bare, wan, and giantlike, as it rose amidst the surrounding waste, it borrowed even a more startling and ghostly appearance from the cold and lifeless moon-

beams which fell around and upon it like a shroud. The retreating steed I had driven before me, paused by this tree. I hastened my steps, as if by an involuntary impulse, as well as the enfeebled animal I was leading would allow me, and discovered a horseman galloping across the waste at full speed. The ground over which he passed was steeped in the moonshine, and I saw the long and disguising cloak, in which he was enveloped, as clearly as by the light of day. I paused: and as I was following him with my looks, my eye fell upon some obscure object by

the left side of the pool. I threw my horse's rein over the hedge, and firmly grasping my stick, hastened to the spot. As I approached the object, I perceived that it was a human figure; it was lying still and motionless: the limbs were half immersed in the water—the face was turned upwards—the side and throat were wet with a deep red stain—it was of blood: the thin, dark hairs of the head were clotted together over a frightful and disfiguring confusion. I bent over the face in a shuddering and freezing silence. It was the countenance of Sir John Tyrrel!

CHAPTER LXV.

————— Marry, he was dead—

And the right valiant Banquo walked too late :

Whom you may say, if it please you, Fleance killed,

For Fleance fled !—*Macbeth.*

It is a fearful thing, even to the hardest nerves, to find ourselves suddenly alone with the dead. How much more so, if we have, but a breathing interval before, moved and conversed with the warm and living likeness of the motionless clay before us !

And this was the man from whom I had parted in coldness—almost in anger—at a word—a breath ! I took up the heavy hand—it fell from my grasp ; and as it did so, I thought a change passed over the livid countenance. I was deceived ; it was but a light cloud flitting over the moon ;—it rolled away, and the placid and guiltless light shone over that scene of dread and blood, making more wild and chilling the eternal contrast of earth and heaven—man and his Maker—passion and immutability—death and eternal life.

But that was not a moment for reflection—a thousand thoughts hurried upon me, and departed as swift and confusedly as they came. My mind seemed a jarring and benighted chaos of the faculties which were its elements ; and I had stood several minutes over the corpse before, by a vigorous effort, I shook off the stupor that possessed me, and began to think of the course that it now behoved me to pursue.

The house I had noted in the morning was, I knew, within a few minutes' walk of the spot ; but it belonged to Dawson, upon whom the first weight of my suspicions rested. I called to

mind the disreputable character of that man, and the still more daring and hardened one of his companion Thornton. I remembered the reluctance of the deceased to accompany them, and the well-grounded reason he assigned ; and, my suspicions amounting to certainty, I resolved rather to proceed to Chester Park, and there give the alarm, than to run the unnecessary risk of interrupting the murderers in the very lair of their retreat. And yet, thought I, as I turned slowly away, how if *they* were the villains, is the appearance and flight of the disguised horseman to be accounted for ?

Then flashed upon my recollection all that Tyrrell had said of the dogged pursuit of that mysterious person, and the circumstance of his having passed me upon the road so immediately after Tyrrell had quitted me. These reflections associated with a name that I did not dare breathe even to myself, although I could not suppress a suspicion which accounted at once for the pursuit, and even for the deed, made me waver in, and almost renounce, my former condemnation of Thornton and his friend ; and by the time I reached the white gate and dwarfish avenue which led to Dawson's house, I resolved, at all events, to halt at the solitary mansion, and mark the effect my information would cause.

A momentary fear for my own safety came across me, but was as instantly dismissed ;—for even sup-

posing the friends were guilty, still it would be no object to them to extend their remorseless villany to me; and I knew that I could sufficiently command my own thoughts to prevent any suspicion I might form, from mounting to my countenance, or discovering itself in my manner.

There was a light in the upper story: it burned still and motionless. How holy seemed the tranquillity of life, contrasted with the forced and fearful silence of the death scene I had just witnessed! I rang twice at the door—no one came to answer my summons, but the light in the upper window moved hurriedly to and fro.

"They are coming," said I to myself. No such thing—the casement above was opened—I looked up, and discovered, to my infinite comfort and delight, a blunderbuss protruded eight inches out of the window in a direct line with my head; I receded close to the wall with no common precipitation.

"Get away, you rascal," said a gruff, but trembling voice, "or I'll blow your brains out."

"My good sir," I replied, still keeping my situation, "I come on urgent business, either to Mr. Thornton or Mr. Dawson; and you had better, therefore, if the delay is not very inconvenient, defer the honour you offer me, till I have delivered my message."

"Master and 'Squire Thornton are not returned from Newmarket, and we cannot let any one in till they come home," replied the voice, in a tone somewhat mollified by my rational remonstrance; and while I was deliberating what rejoinder to make, a rough, red head, like Liston's in a farce, poked itself cautiously out under cover of the blunderbuss, and seemed to reconnoitre my horse and myself. Presently another head, but attired in the more civilised gear of a cap and flowers, peeped over the first per-

son's left shoulder; the view appeared to reassure them both.

"Sir," said the female, "my husband and Mr. Thornton are not returned; and we have been so much alarmed of late, by an attack on the house, that I cannot admit any one till their return."

"Madam," I replied, reverently doffing my hat, "I do not like to alarm you by mentioning the information I should have given to Mr. Dawson; only oblige me by telling them, on their return, to look beside the pool on the common; they will then do as best pleases them."

Upon this speech, which certainly was of no agreeable tendency, the blunderbuss palpitated so violently, that I thought it highly imprudent to tarry any longer in so perilous a vicinity; accordingly, I made the best of my way out of the avenue, and once more resumed my road to Chester Park.

I arrived there at length; the gentlemen were still in the dining-room. I sent out for Lord Chester, and communicated the scene I had witnessed, and the cause of my delay.

"What! Brown Bob lamed?" said he, "and Tyrrell—poor—poor fellow, how shocking! We must send instantly. Here, John! Tom! Wilson!" and his lordship shouted and rang the bell in an indescribable agitation.

The under butler appeared, and Lord Chester began—"My head groom—Sir John Tyrrell is murdered—violent sprain in off leg—send lights with Mr. Pelham—poor gentleman—an express instantly to Dr. Physicon—Mr. Pelham will tell you all—Brown Bob—his throat cut from ear to ear—what shall be done?" and with this coherent and explanatory harangue, the marquis sank down in his chair in a sort of hysteric.

The under butler looked at him in suspicious bewilderment. "Come," said I, "I will explain what his lord-

ship means ;" and, taking the man out of the room, I gave him, in brief, the necessary particulars. I ordered a fresh horse for myself, and four horsemen to accompany me. While these were preparing, the news was rapidly spreading, and I was soon surrounded by the whole house. Many of the gentlemen wished to accompany me; and Lord Chester, who had at last recovered from his stupor, insisted upon heading the search. We set off, to the number of fourteen, and soon arrived at Dawson's house: the light in the upper room was still burning. We rang, and after a brief pause, Thornton himself opened the door to us. He looked pale and agitated.

"How shocking!" he said directly—"we are only just returned from the spot."

"Accompany us, Mr. Thornton," said I, sternly, and fixing my eye upon him.

"Certainly," was his immediate answer, without testifying any confusion—"I will fetch my hat." He went into the house for a moment.

"Do you suspect these people?" whispered Lord Chester.

"Not suspect," said I, "but *doubt*."

We proceeded down the avenue: "Where is Mr. Dawson?" said I to Thornton.

"Oh, within!" answered Thornton. "Shall I fetch him?"

"Do," was my brief reply.

Thornton was absent some minutes; when he reappeared, Dawson was following him. "Poor fellow," said he to me in a low tone—"he was so shocked by the sight, that he is still all in a panic; besides, as you will see, he is half drunk still."

I made no answer, but looked narrowly at Dawson; he was evidently, as Thornton said, greatly intoxicated; his eyes swam, and his feet staggered as he approached us; yet, through all the natural effects of drunkenness, he

seemed nervous and frightened. This, however, might be the natural (and consequently innocent) effect of the mere sight of an object so full of horror; and, accordingly, I laid little stress upon it.

We reached the fatal spot: the body seemed perfectly unmoved. "Why," said I, apart to Thornton, while all the rest were crowding fearfully round the corpse—"why did you not take the body within?"

"I was going to return here with our servant for that purpose," answered the gambler; "for poor Dawson was both too drunk and too nervous to give me any assistance."

"And how came it," I rejoined, eyeing him searchingly, "that you and your friend had not returned home when I called there, although you had both long since passed me on the road, and I had never overtaken you?"

Thornton, without any hesitation, replied—"Because, during the violence of the shower, we cut across the fields to an old shed, which we recollected, and we remained there till the rain had ceased."

"They are probably innocent," thought I—and I turned to look once more at the body, which our companions had now raised. There was upon the head a strong contusion, as if inflicted by some blunt and heavy instrument. The fingers of the right hand were deeply gashed, and one of them almost dismembered: the unfortunate man had, in all probability, grasped the sharp weapon from which his other wounds proceeded; these were one wide cut along the throat, and another in the side; either of them would have occasioned his death.

In loosening the clothes, another wound was discovered, but apparently of a less fatal nature; and in lifting the body, the broken blade of a long sharp instrument, like a case knife,

was discovered. It was the opinion of the surgeon, who afterwards examined the body, that the blade had been broken by coming in contact with one of the rib bones; and it was by this that he accounted for the slightness of the last mentioned wound. I looked carefully among the fern and long grass, to see if I could discover any other token of the murderer: Thornton assisted me. At the distance of some feet from the body, I thought I perceived something glitter. I hastened to the place, and picked up a miniature. I was just going to cry out, when Thornton whispered—"Hush! I know the picture; it is as I suspected!"

An icy thrill ran through my very heart. With a desperate but trembling hand, I cleansed from the picture the blood, in which, notwithstanding its distance from the corpse, the greater part of it was bathed. I looked upon the features; they were those of a young and singularly beautiful female. I recognised them not: I turned to the other side of the miniature; upon it were braided two locks of hair—one was the long, dark ringlet of a woman, the other was of a light auburn. Beneath were four letters. I looked eagerly at them. "My eyes are dim," said I, in a low tone to Thornton, "I cannot trace the initials."

"But *I* can," replied he, in the

same whispered key, but with a savage exultation, which made my heart stand still: "they are G. D., R. G.; they are the initials of Gertrude Douglas and *Reginald Glanville*."

I looked up at the speaker—our eyes met—I grasped his hand vehemently. He understood me. "Put it up," said he; "we will keep the secret." All this, so long in the recital, passed in the rapidity of a moment.

"Have you found any thing there, Pelham?" shouted one of our companions.

"No!" cried I, thrusting the miniature in my bosom, and turning unconcernedly away.

We carried the corpse to Dawson's house. The poor wife was in fits. We heard her scream as we laid the body upon a table in the parlour.

"What more can be done?" said Lord Chester.

"Nothing," was the general answer. No excitement makes people insensible to the chance of catching cold!

"Let us go home, then, and send to the nearest magistrate," exclaimed our host: and this proposal required no repetition.

On our way, Chester said to me, "That fellow Dawson looked devilish uneasy—don't you still suspect him and his friend?"

"*I do not!*" answered I, emphatically.

CHAPTER LXVI.

And now I'm in the world alone,

* * * * *

But why for others should I groan,

When none will sigh for me?—BYRON.

THE whole country was in confusion at the news of the murder. All the myrmidons of justice were employed in the most active research for the murderers. Some few persons were taken up on suspicion, but were as instantly discharged. Thornton and Dawson underwent a long and rigorous examination; but no single tittle of evidence against them appeared: they were consequently dismissed. The only suspicious circumstance against them, was their delay on the road: but the cause given, the same as Thornton had at first assigned to me, was probable and natural. The shed was indicated, and, as if to confirm Thornton's account, a glove belonging to that person was found there. To crown all, my own evidence, in which I was constrained to mention the circumstance of the muffled horseman having passed me on the road, and being found by me on the spot itself, threw the whole weight of suspicion upon that man, whoever he might be.

All attempts, however, to discover him were in vain. It was ascertained that a man, muffled in a cloak, was seen at Newmarket, but not remarkably observed; it was also discovered, that a person so habited had put up a grey horse to bait in one of the inns at Newmarket; but in the throng of strangers neither the horse nor its owner had drawn down any particular remark.

On further inquiry, testimony differed; *four* or *five* men, in cloaks,

had left their horses at the stables; one ostler changed the colour of the steed to brown, a second to black, a third deposed that the gentleman was remarkably tall, and the waiter swore solemnly he had given a glass of brandy and water to an *unked* looking gentleman, in a cloak, who was remarkably short. In fine, no material point could be proved, and though the officers were still employed in active search, they could trace nothing that promised a speedy discovery.

As for myself, as soon as I decently could, I left Chester Park, with a most satisfactory despatch in my pocket, from its possessor to Lord Dawton, and found myself once more on the road to London.

Alas! how different were my thoughts, how changed the temper of my mind, since I had last travelled that road! Then I was full of hope, energy, ambition—of interest for Reginald Glanville—of adoration for his sister; and *now*, I leaned back listless and dispirited, without a single feeling to gladden the restless and feverish despair which, ever since *that* night, had possessed me! What was ambition henceforth to me! The most selfish amongst us must have some human being *to* whom to refer—with whom to connect, to associate, to treasure the triumphs and gratifications of self. Where now for my heart was such a being? My earliest friend, for whom my esteem was the greater for his sorrows, my interest the keener for his mystery, Reginald

Glanville, was a murderer! a dastardly, a barbarous felon, whom the chance of an instant might convict!—and she—she, the only woman in the world I had ever really loved—who had ever pierced the thousand folds of my ambitious and scheming heart—*she* was the sister of the assassin!

Then came over my mind the savage and exulting eye of Thornton, when it read the damning record of Glanville's guilt; and in spite of my horror at the crime of my former friend, I trembled for his safety; nor was I satisfied with myself at my prevarication as a witness. It is true that I had told the truth, but I had concealed *all* the truth; and my heart swelled proudly and bitterly against the miniature which I still concealed in my bosom.

To save a criminal, in whose safety I was selfishly concerned, I felt that I had tampered with my honour, paltered with the truth, and broken what Justice, not over-harshly, deemed a preceptory and inviolable duty.

It was with a heightened pulse, and a burning cheek, that I entered London; before midnight I was in a high fever; they sent for the vultures of physic—I was bled copiously—I was kept quiet in bed for six days; at the end of that time, my constitution and youth restored me. I took up one of the newspapers listlessly; Glanville's name struck me; I read the varagraph which contained it—it was a high-flown and fustian panegyric on his genius and promise. I turned to another column: it contained a long speech he had the night before made in the House of Commons.

"Can such things be?" thought I; yea, and thereby hangs a secret and an anomaly in the human heart. A man may commit the greatest of crimes, and (if no other succeed to it) it changes not the current of his

being; to all the world—to all intents—for all objects he may be the same. He may equally serve his country—equally benefit his friends—he generous—brave—benevolent, all that he was before. *One* crime, however heinous, does not necessarily cause a revolution in the system—it is only the *perpetual* course of sins, vices, follies, however insignificant they may seem, which alters the nature and hardens the heart.

My mother was out of town when I returned there. They had written to her during my illness, and while I was yet musing over the day's journal, a letter from her was put into my hand. I transcribe it.

"MY DEAREST HENRY,

"How dreadfully uneasy I am about you! write to me directly. I would come to town myself, but am staying with dear Lady Dawton, who will not hear of my going; and I cannot offend her, for *your* sake. By the bye, why have you not called upon Lord Dawton? but, I forgot, you have been ill. My dear, dear child, I am wretched about you, and how pale your illness will make you look! just too, as the best part of the season is coming on. How unlucky! Pray, don't wear a black cravat when you next call on Lady Roseville; but choose a very fine *baptiste* one—it will make you look rather delicate than ill. What physician do you have? I hope, in God, that it is Sir Henry Halford. I shall be too miserable if it is not. I am sure no one can conceive the anguish I suffer. Your father, too, poor man, has been laid up with the gout for the last three days. Keep up your spirits, my dearest child, and get some light books to entertain you: but, pray, as soon as you *are* well, do go to Lord Dawton's—he is dying to see you; but be sure not to catch cold. How did you like Lady Chester? Pray

take the greatest care of yourself, and write soon to

"Your wretched, and most
"Affectionate mother,
"F. P."

"P. S. How dreadfully shocking about that poor Sir John Tyrrell!"

I tossed the letter from me. Heaven pardon me if the misanthropy of my mood made me less grateful for the maternal solicitude than I should otherwise have been.

I took up one of the numerous books with which my table was covered; it was a worldly work of one of the French reasoners; it gave a new turn to my thoughts—my mind reverted to its former projects of ambition. Who does not know what active citizens private misfortune makes us? The public is like the pools of Bethesda—we all hasten there, to plunge in and rid ourselves of our afflictions.

I drew my portfolio to me, and wrote to Lord Dawton. Three hours after I had sent the note, he called upon me. I gave him Lord Chester's letter, but he had already received from that nobleman a notification of my success. He was profuse in his compliments and thanks.

"And, do you know," added the statesman, "that you have quite made a conquest of Lord Gulocton? He speaks of you publicly in the highest terms: I wish we could get him and his votes. We *must* be strengthened, my dear Pelham; every thing depends on the crisis."

"Are you certain of the cabinet?" I asked.

"Yes; it is not yet publicly announced, but it is fully known amongst us, who comes in, and who stays out. I am to have the place of —."

"I congratulate your lordship from my heart. What post do you design for me?"

Lord Dawton changed countenance. "Why—really—Pelham, we have not yet filled up the lesser appointments but you shall be well remembered—*well*, my dear Pelham—be sure of it.

I looked at the noble speaker with a glance which, I flatter myself, is peculiar to me. Is, thought I, the embryo minister playing upon me as upon one of his dependent tools? Let him beware! The anger of the moment passed away.

"Lord Dawton," said I, "one word, and I have done discussing my claims for the present. Do you mean to place me in Parliament as soon as you are in the cabinet? What else you intend for me, I question not."

"Yes, assuredly, Pelham. How can you doubt it?"

"Enough!—and now read this letter from France."

* * * * *

Two days after my interview with Lord Dawton, as I was riding leisurely through the Green Park, in no very bright and social mood, one of the favoured carriages, whose owners are permitted to say, "*Hic iter est nobis*," overtook me. A sweet voice ordered the coachman to stop, and then addressed itself to me.

"What, the hero of Chester Park returned, without having once narrated his adventures to me?"

"Beautiful Lady Roseville" said I, "I plead guilty of negligence—not treason. I forgot, it is true, to appear before you, but I forget not the devotion of my duty now that I behold you. Command, and I obey."

"See, Ellen," said Lady Roseville, turning to a bending and blushing countenance beside her, which I then first perceived—"see what it is to be a knight errant; even his language is worthy of Amadis of Gaul—but—(again addressing me) your adventures are really too shocking a subject to treat lightly. We lay our

serious orders on you to come to our castle this night; we shall be alone."

"Willingly shall I repair to your bower, fayre ladie; but tell me, I beseech you, how many persons are signified in the word 'alone?'"

"Why," answered Lady Roseville, "I fear *we may* have a few people with us; but I think, Ellen, we may promise our chevalier that the number shall not exceed twelve."

I bowed and rode on. What worlds would I not have given to have touched the hand of the countess's companion, though only for an instant. But—and that fearful *but*, chilled me, like an icebolt. I put spurs to my horse, and dashed fiercely onwards. There was rather a high wind stirring, and I bent my face from it, so as scarcely to see the course of my spirited and impatient horse.

"What ho, sir!—what ho!" cried a shrill voice—"for Heaven's sake, don't ride over me *before* dinner, whatever you do after it!"

I pulled up. "Ah, Lord Guloaseton! how happy I am to see you; pray forgive my blindness, and my horse's stupidity."

"'Tis an ill wind," answered the noble gourmand, "which blows nobody good;—an excellent proverb, the veracity of which is daily attested; for, however unpleasant a keen wind may be, there is no doubt of its being a marvellous whetter of that greatest of Heaven's blessings—an *appetite*. Little, however, did I expect, that besides blowing me a relish for my *sauté de foie gras*, it would also blow me one who might, probably, be a partaker of my enjoyment. Honour me with your company at dinner to-day."

"What saloon will you dine in, my Lord Lucullus?" said I, in allusion to the custom of the epicure, by whose name I addressed him.

"The saloon of Diana," replied Guloaseton—"for she must certainly

have shot the fine buck of which Lord H. sent me the haunch that we shall have to-day. It is the true old Meynell breed. I ask you not to meet Mr. So-and-so, and Lord What-d'ye-call-him: I ask you to meet a *sauté de foie gras*, and a haunch of venison."

"I will most certainly pay them my respects. Never did I know before how far *things* were better company than persons. Your lordship has taught me that great truth."

"God bless me!" cried Guloaseton, with an air of vexation, "here comes the Duke of Stilton, a horrid person, who told me the other day, at my *petit diner*, when I apologised to him for some strange error of my *artiste's*, by which common vinegar had been substituted for Chili—who told me—what think you he told me? You cannot guess,—he told me, forsooth, that he did not care what he ate; and, for his part, he could make a very good dinner off a beef-steak! Why the dence, then, did he come and dine with *me*? Could he have said any thing more cutting? Imagine my indignation, when I looked round my table and saw so many good things thrown away upon such an idiot."

Scarcely was the last word out of the gourmand's mouth before the noble personage so designated joined us. It amused me to see Guloaseton's contempt (which he scarcely took the pains to suppress) of a person whom all Europe honoured, and his evident weariness of a companion, whose society every one else would have coveted as the *summum bonum* of worldly distinction. As for me, feeling anything but social, I soon left the ill-matched pair, and rode into the other park.

Just as I entered it, I perceived, on a dull, yet cross-looking pony, Mr. Wormwood, of litter memory. Although we had not met since our mutual sojourn at Sir Lionel Garrett's, and were then upon very cool terms

of acquaintance, he seemed resolved to recognise and claim me.

"My dear sir," said he, with a ghastly smile, "I am rejoiced once more to see you; bless me, how pale you look. I heard you had been very ill. Pray, have you been yet to that man who professes to cure consumption in the worst stages?"

"Yes," said I, "he read me two or three letters of reference from the patients he had cured. His last, he said, was a gentleman very far gone—a Mr. Wormwood."

"Oh, you are pleased to be facetious," said the cynic, coldly—"but pray do tell me about that horrid affair at Chester Park. How disagreeable it must have been to you to be taken up on *suspicion of the murder!*"

"Sir," said I, haughtily, "what do you mean?"

"Oh, you were not—wer'n't you? Well, I always thought it unlikely; but every one says so——"

"My dear sir," I rejoined, "how long is it since you have minded what every body says? If I were so foolish, I should not be riding with you now; but I have always said, in contradiction to every body, and even in spite of being universally laughed at for my singular opinion, that you, my dear Mr. Wormwood, were by no means silly, nor ignorant, nor insolent, nor intrusive; that you were, on the contrary, a very decent author, and a very good sort of man; and that you were so benevolent, that you daily granted, to some one or other, the greatest happiness in your power: it is a happiness I am now about to enjoy, and it consists in wishing you 'good bye!'" And without waiting for Mr. Wormwood's answer, I gave the rein to my horse, and was soon lost among the crowd, which had now begun to assemble.

Hyde Park is a stupid place. The English of the fashionable world make business an enjoyment, and enjoyment a business: they are born without a smile; they rove about public places like so many easterly winds—cold, sharp, and cutting; or like a group of fogs on a frosty day, sent out of his hall by Boreas, for the express purpose of *looking black at one another*. When they ask you, "how you do," you would think they were measuring the length of your coffin. They are ever, it is true, *labouring* to be agreeable; but they are like Sisyphus, the stone they roll up the hill with so much toil, runs down again, and hits you a thump on the legs. They are sometimes *polite*, but invariably *uncivil*; their warmth is always artificial—their cold never; they are stiff without dignity, and cringing without manners. They offer you an affront, and call it "plain truth;" they wound your feelings, and tell you it is manly "to speak their minds;" at the same time, while they have neglected all the graces and charities of artifice, they have adopted all its falsehood and deceit. While they profess to abhor servility, they adulate the peerage; while they tell you they care not a rush for the minister, they move heaven and earth for an invitation from the minister's wife. Then their amusements!—the heat—the dust—the sameness—the slowness, of that odious park in the morning; and the same exquisite scene repeated in the evening, on the condensed stage of a rout-room, where one has more heat, with less air, and a narrower dungeon, with diminished possibility of escape!—we wander about like the damned in the story of Vathek, and we pass our lives, like the royal philosopher of Prussia, in conjugating the verb. *Je m'ennuie.*

CHAPTER LXVII.

— In solo vivendi causa palato est.—JOURNAL.

— They would talk of nothing but high life, and high-lived company; with other fashionable topics, such as pictures, taste, Shakspeare, and the musical glasses.—*Vicar of Wakefield*

THE reflections which closed the last chapter will serve to show that I was in no very amiable or convivial temper, when I drove to Lord Gulose-ton's dinner. However, in the world, it matters little what may be our real mood, the mask hides the bent brow and the writhing lip.

Gulose-ton was stretched on his sofa, gazing with upward eye at the beautiful Venus which hung above his hearth. "You are welcome, Pelham; I am worshipping my household divinity!"

I prostrated myself on the opposite sofa, and made some answer to the classical epicure, which made us both laugh heartily. We then talked of pictures, painters, poets, the ancients, and Dr. Henderson on Wines; we gave ourselves up, without restraint, to the enchanting fascination of the last-named subject; and, our mutual enthusiasm confirming our cordiality, we went down stairs to our dinner, as charmed with each other as boon companions always should be.

"This is as it should be," said I, looking round at the well-filled table, and the sparkling spirits immersed in the ice-pails; "a genuine *friendly* dinner. It is very rarely that I dare entrust myself to such extempore hospitality—*miserrum est aliendū vivere quadrā*;—a friendly dinner, a family meal, are things from which I fly with undisguised aversion. It is very hard, that in England, one cannot have a friend, on pain of being shot or poisoned; if you refuse his familiar

invitations, he thinks you mean to affront him, and says something rude, for which you are forced to challenge him; if you accept them, you perish beneath the weight of boiled mutton and turnips, or —"

"My dear friend," interrupted Gulose-ton, with his mouth full, "it is very true; but this is no time for talking; *let us eat*."

I acknowledged the justice of the rebuke, and we did not interchange another word beyond the exclamations of surprise, pleasure, admiration, or dissatisfaction, called up by the objects which engrossed our attention, till we found ourselves alone with our dessert.

When I thought my host had imbibed a sufficient quantity of wine, I once more renewed my attack. I had tried him before upon that point of vanity which is centred in power, and political consideration, but in vain; I now bethought me of another.

"How few persons there are," said I, "capable of giving even a tolerable dinner—how many capable of admiring one worthy of estimation! I could imagine no greater triumph for the ambitious epicure, than to see at his board the first and most honoured persons of the state, all lost in wonder at the depth, the variety, the purity, the munificence of his taste; all forgetting, in the extorted respect which a gratified palate never fails to produce, the more visionary schemes and projects which usually occupy their thoughts;—to find those whom

all England are soliciting for posts and power, become, in their turn, eager and craving aspirants for places at his table;—to know that all the grand movements of the ministerial body are planned and agitated over the inspirations of his viands and the excitement of his wine. From a haunch of venison, like the one of which we have partaken to-day, what noble and substantial measures might arise! From a *sauté de foie*, what delicate subtleties of finesse might have their origin! From a ragout *à la financière*, what godlike improvements in taxation! Oh, could such a lot be mine, I would envy neither Napoleon for the goodness of his fortune, nor S—— for the grandeur of his genius."

Guloseton laughed. "The ardour of your enthusiasm blinds your philosophy, my dear Pelham: like Montesquieu, the liveliness of your fancy often makes you advance paradoxes which the consideration of your judgment would afterwards condemn. For instance, you must allow, that if one had all those fine persons at one's table, one would be forced to talk more, and consequently to eat less: moreover, you would either be excited by your triumph, or you would not,—that is indisputable; if you are *not* excited, you have the bore for nothing; if you *are* excited, you spoil your digestion: nothing is so detrimental to the stomach as the feverish inquietude of the passions. All philosophies recommend calm as the *salon* of their code; and you must perceive, that if, in the course you advise, one has occasional opportunities of pride, one also has those of mortification. Mortification! terrible word; how many apoplexies have arisen from its source! No, Pelham, away with ambition; fill your glass, and learn, at last, the secret of real philosophy."

"Confound the man!" was my

mental anathema.—"Long life to the Solomon of *sautés*," was my *audible* exclamation.

"There is something," resumed Guloseton, "in your countenance and manner, at once so frank, lively, and ingenuous, that one is not only prepossessed in your favour, but desirous of your friendship. I tell you, therefore, in confidence, that nothing more amuses me than to see the courtship I receive from each party. I laugh at all the unwise and passionate contests in which others are engaged, and I would as soon think of entering into the chivalry of Don Quixote, or attacking the visionary enemies of the Bedlamite, as of taking part in the fury of politicians. At present, looking afar off at their delirium, I can ridicule it: were I to engage in it, I should be hurt by it. I have no wish to become the weeping, instead of the laughing, philosopher. I sleep well now—I have no desire to sleep ill. I eat well—why should I lose my appetite? I am undisturbed and unattacked in the enjoyments best suited to my taste—for what purpose should I be hurried into the abuse of the journalists and the witticisms of pamphleteers? I can ask those whom I like to my house—why should I be forced into asking those whom I do *not* like? In fine, my good Pelham, why should I sour my temper and shorten my life, put my green old age into flannel and physic, and become, from the happiest of sages, the most miserable of fools? Ambition reminds me of what Bacon says of anger—'It is like rain, it breaks itself upon that which it falls on.' Pelham, my boy, taste the *Chateau Margot*."

However hurt my vanity might be in having so ill succeeded in my object, I could not help smiling with satisfaction at my entertainer's principles of wisdom. My diplomatic honour, however, was concerned, and I resolved yet to gain him. If, here

after, I succeeded, it was by a very different method than I had yet taken; meanwhile, I departed from the house of this modern Apicius with a new insight into the great book of mankind, and a new conclusion from its pages; viz. that no virtue can make so perfect a philosopher as the senses. There is no content like that of the epicure—no active code of morals so difficult to conquer as the inertness of his indolence; he is the only being in the world for whom the present has a supream gratification than the future.

My cabriolet soon whirled me to Lady Roseville's door; the first person I saw in the drawing-room, was Ellen. She lifted up her eyes with that familiar sweetness with which they had long since learnt to welcome me. "She is the sister of a murderer!" was the thought that curled my blood, and I bowed distantly and passed on.

I met Vincent. He seemed dispirited and dejected. He already saw how ill his party had succeeded; above all, he was enraged at the idea of the person assigned by rumour to fill the place he had intended for himself. This person was a sort of rival to his lordship, a man of quaintness and quotation, with as much learning as Vincent, equal wit, and—but that personage is still in office, and I will say no more, lest he should think I flatter.

To our subject. It has probably been observed that Lord Vincent had indulged less of late in that peculiar strain of learned humour formerly his wont. The fact is, that he had been playing another part; he wished to remove from his character that appearance of literary coxcombry with which he was accused. He knew well how necessary, in the game of politics, it is to appear no less a man of the world than of books; and though he was not averse to display his clerkship and scholastic information, yet he

endeavoured to make them seem rather valuable for their weight, than curious for their fashion. How few there are in the world who retain, after a certain age, the character originally natural to them! We all get, as it were, a second skin: the little foibles, propensities, eccentricities, we first indulged through affectation, conglomerate and encrust till the artificiality grows into nature.

"Pelham," said Vincent, with a cold smile, "the day will be yours; the battle is not to the strong—the Whigs will triumph. *Fugere Pudor, rerumque, fidesque; in quorum subière locum fraudesque dolique insidiæque, et vis, et amor sceleratus habendi.*"*

"A pretty modest quotation," said I. "You must allow, at least, that the *amor sceleratus habendi* was also, in some moderate degree, shared by the *Pudor* and *Fides* which characterise your party; otherwise I am at a loss how to account for the tough struggle against us we have lately had the honour of resisting."

"Never mind," replied Vincent, "I will not refute you:—It is not for us, the defeated, to argue with you, the victors. But pray, (continued Vincent, with a sneer which pleased me not,) pray, among this windfall of the Hesperian fruit, what nice little apple will fall to your share?"

"My good Vincent, don't let us anticipate; if any such apple should come into my lap, let it not be that of discord between us."

"Who talks of discord?" asked Lady Roseville, joining us.

"Lord Vincent," said I, "fancies himself the celebrated fruit, on which was written, *detur pulchriori, to be given to the fairest*. Suffer me, therefore, to make him a present to your ladyship."

* "*Shame, Truth, and Faith have flown; in their stead creep in frauds, craft, snares, force, and the rascally love of gain.*"

Vincent muttered something which, as I really liked and esteemed him, I was resolved not to hear; accordingly I turned to another part of the room: there I found Lady Dawton—she was a tall, handsome woman, as proud as a liberal's wife ought to be. She received me with unusual graciousness, and I sat myself beside her. Three dowagers, and an old beau of the old school, were already sharing the conversation with the haughty countess. I found that the topic was society.

"No," said the old beau, who was entitled Mr. Clarendon, "society is very different from what it was in my younger days. You remember, Lady Paulet, those delightful parties at D—— House? Where shall we ever find anything like them? Such ease, such company—even the mixture was so piquant; if one chanced to sit next a *bourgeois*, he was sure to be distinguished for his wit or talent. People were not tolerated, as now, merely for their riches."

"True," cried Lady Dawton, "it is the introduction of low persons, without any single pretension, which spoils the society of the present day!" And the three dowagers sighed amen, to this remark.

"And yet," said I, "since I may safely say so *here* without being suspected of a personality in the shape of a compliment, don't you think, that without any such mixture we should be very indifferent company? Do we not find those dinners and *soirées* the pleasantest where we see a minister next to a punster, a poet to a prince, and a coxcomb like me next to a beauty like Lady Dawton? The more variety there is in the conversation, the more agreeable it becomes!"

"Very just," answered Mr. Clarendon; "but it is precisely because I wish for that variety that I dislike a miscellaneous society. If one does not know the person beside whom one

has the happiness of sitting, what possible subject can one broach with any prudence. I put politics aside, because, thanks to party spirit, we rarely meet those we are strongly opposed to; but if we sneer at the methodists, our neighbour may be a saint—if we abuse a new book, he may have written it—if we observe that the tone of the piano-forte is bad, his father may have made it—if we complain of the uncertainty of the commercial interest, his uncle may have been gazetted last week. I name no exaggerated instances; on the contrary, I refer these general remarks to particular individuals, whom all of us have probably met. Thus, you see, that a variety of topics is proscribed in a mixed company, because some one or other of them will be certain to offend."

Perceiving that we listened to him with attention, Mr. Clarendon continued—"Nor is this more than a minor objection to the great mixture prevalent amongst us: a more important one may be found in the universal imitation it produces. The influx of common persons being once permitted, certain sets recede, as it were, from the contamination, and contract into very diminished coteries. Living familiarly solely amongst themselves, however they may be forced into visiting promiscuously, they imbibe certain manners, certain peculiarities in mode and words—even in an accent or a pronunciation, which are confined to themselves: and whatever differs from these little eccentricities, they are apt to condemn as vulgar and suburban. Now, the fastidiousness of these sets making them difficult of intimate access, even to many of their superiors in actual rank, those very superiors, by a natural feeling in human nature, of prizing what is rare, even if it is worthless, are the first to solicit their acquaintance; and, as a sign that they enjoy

it, to *imitate* those peculiarities which are the especial hieroglyphics of this sacred few. The lower grades catch the contagion, and *imitate* those they imagine most likely to know the essentials of the mode; and thus manners, unnatural to all, are transmitted second-hand, third-hand, fourth-hand, till they are ultimately filtered into something worse than no manners at all. Hence, you perceive all people timid, stiff, unnatural, and ill at ease, they are dressed up in a garb which does not fit them, to which they have never been accustomed, and are as little at home as the wild Indian in the boots and garments of the more civilised European."

"And hence," said I, "springs that universal vulgarity of idea, as well as manner, which pervades all society—for nothing is so plebeian as imitation."

"A very evident truism!" said Clarendon. "What I lament most, is the injudicious method certain persons took to change this order of things, and diminish the *désagrémens* of the mixture we speak of. I remember well, when Almack's was first set up, the intention was to keep away the rich *rôturiers* from a place, the tone of which was also intended to be contrary to their own. For this purpose the patronesses were instituted, the price of admission made extremely low, and all ostentatious refreshments discarded: it was an admirable institution for the interests of the little oligarchy who ruled it—but it has only increased the general imitation and vulgarity. Perhaps the records of that institution contain things more disgraceful to the aristocracy of England, than the whole history of Europe can furnish. And how could the *Messieurs et Mesdames Jourdain*s help following the servile and debasing example of *Monseigneur le Duc et Pair*?"

"How strange it is," said one of the

dowagers, "that of all the novels on society with which we are annually inundated, there is scarcely one which gives even a tolerable description of it!"

"Not strange," said Clarendon, with a formal smile, "if your ladyship will condescend to reflect. Most of the writers upon our little great world, have seen nothing of it: at most, they have been occasionally admitted into the routs of the B's and C's of the second, or rather the third set. A very few are, it is true, gentlemen; but gentlemen, who are not writers, are as bad as writers who are not gentlemen. In one work, which, since it is popular, I will not name, there is a stiffness and stiltedness in the dialogue and descriptions perfectly ridiculous. The author makes his countesses always talking of their family, and his earls always quoting the peerage. There is as much fuss about state, and dignity, and pride, as if the greatest amongst us were not far too busy with the petty affairs of the world to have time for such lofty vanities. There is only one rule necessary for a clever writer who wishes to delineate the *beau monde*. It is this: let him consider that 'dukes, and lords, and noble princes,' eat, drink, talk, move, exactly the same as any other class of civilised people—nay, the very subjects in conversation are, for the most part, the same in all sets—only, perhaps, they are somewhat more familiarly and easily treated with us than among the lower orders, who fancy rank is distinguished by pomposity, and that state affairs are discussed with the solemnity of a tragedy—that we are always my lording and my ladying each other—that we ridicule commoners, and curl our hair with De-brett's Peerage."

We all laughed at this speech, the truth of which we readily acknowledged.

"Nothing," said Lady Dawton, "amuses me more than to see the great distinction which novel-writers make between the titled and the untitled; they seem to be perfectly unaware that a commoner, of ancient family and large fortune, is very often of far more real rank and estimation, and even *weight*, in what they are pleased to term *fashion*, than many of the members of the Upper House. And what amuses me as much, is the *no* distinction they make between all people who have titles:—Lord A——, the little baron, is exactly the same as Lord Z——, the great marquess, equally haughty and equally important."

"*Mais, mon Dieu,*" said a little French count, who had just joined us; "how is it that you can expect to find a description of society entertaining, when the society itself is so dull!—the closer the copy, the more tiresome it must be. Your manner, *pour vous amuser*, consists in standing on a crowded staircase, and complaining that you are terribly bored. *L'on s'accoutume difficilement à une vie qui se passe sur l'escalier.*"

"It is very true," said Clarendon, "we cannot defend ourselves. We are a very sensible, thinking, brave, sagacious, generous, industrious, noble-minded people; but it must be confessed, that we are terrible bores to ourselves and all the rest of the world. Lady Paulet, if you *are* going so soon, honour me by accepting my arm."

"You should say your *hand*," said the Frenchman.

"Pardon me," answered the gallant old beau; "I say, with your brave countryman when he lost his legs in battle, and was asked by a lady, like the one who now leans on me, whether he would not sooner have lost his arms? 'No, madam,' said he, (and this, *Monsieur le Comte*, is the answer I give to your rebuke,) 'I want my hands to guard my heart.'"

Finding our little knot was now broken up, I went into another part of the room, and joined Vincent, Lady Roseville, Ellen, and one or two other persons who were assembled round a table covered with books and prints. Ellen was sitting on one side of Lady Roseville; there was a vacant chair next her, but I avoided it, and seated myself on the other side of Lady Roseville.

"Pray, Miss Glanville," said Lord Vincent, taking up a thin volume, "do you greatly admire the poems of this lady?"

"What, Mrs. Hemans?" answered Ellen. "I am more enchanted with her poetry than I can express: if that is 'The Forest Sanctuary' which you have taken up, I am sure you will bear me out in my admiration."

Vincent turned over the leaves with the quiet cynicism of manner habitual to him; but his countenance grew animated after he had read two pages. "This is, indeed, beautiful," said he, "really and genuinely beautiful. How singular that such a work should not be more known! I never met with it before. But whose pencil marks are these?"

"Mine, I believe," said Ellen, modestly.

And Lady Roseville turned the conversation upon Lord Byron. ✓

"I must confess, for my part," said Lord Edward Neville (an author of some celebrity and more merit), "that I am exceedingly weary of those doleful ditties with which we have been favoured for so many years. No sooner had Lord Byron declared himself unhappy, than every young gentleman with a pale face and dark hair, thought himself justified in frowning in the glass and writing Odes to Despair. All persons who could scribble two lines were sure to make them into rhymes of 'blight' and 'night.' Never was there so grand a *punchant* for the *triste*."

"It would be interesting enough," observed Vincent, "to trace the origin of this melancholy mania. People are wrong to attribute it to poor Lord Byron—it certainly came from Germany; perhaps Werter was the first hero of that school."

"There seems," said I, "an unaccountable prepossession among all persons, to imagine that whatever seems gloomy must be profound, and whatever is cheerful must be shallow. They have put poor Philosophy into deep mourning, and given her a coffin for a writing-desk, and a skull for an inkstand."

"Oh," cried Vincent, "I remember some lines so applicable to your remark, that I must forthwith interrupt you, in order to introduce them. Madame de Staël said, in one of her works, that melancholy was a source of perfection. Listen now to my author—

'Une femme nous dit, et nous prouve en effet,
Qu'avant quelques mille ans l'homme sera parfait,
Qu'il devra cet état à la *mélancolie*.
On sait que la tristesse annonce le génie ;
Nous avons déjà fait des progrès étonnans ;
Que de tristes écrits—que de tristes romans !
Des plus noires horreurs nous sommes idolâtres,
Et la *mélancolie* a gagné nos théâtres.'

"What!" cried I, "are you so well acquainted with my favourite book?"

"Yours!" exclaimed Vincent.
"Gods, what a sympathy†; it has

* "A woman tells us, and in fact she proves,
That Man, though slowly, to perfection moves;
But to be perfect, first we must be sad;
Genius, we know, is melancholy mad.
Already Time our startling progress hails;
What cheerless essays!—what disastrous ages!
Horror has grown the amusement of the age,
And Mirth despairing yawns, and flies the stage."

† La Gastronomie, Poëme, par J. Berchoux.

long been my most familiar acquaintance; but—

" 'Tell us what hath chanced to-day,
That Cæsar looks so sad?' "

My eye followed Vincent's to ascertain the meaning of this question, and rested upon Glanville, who had that moment entered the room. I might have known that he was expected, by Lady Roseville's abstraction, the restlessness with which she started at times from her seat, and as instantly resumed it; and the fond expecting looks towards the door, every time it shut or opened, which denote so strongly the absent and dreaming heart of the woman who loves.

Glanville seemed paler than usual, and perhaps even sadder; but he was less *distracted* and abstracted; no sooner did he see, than he approached me, and extended his hand with great cordiality. *His* hand! thought I, and I could not bring myself to accept it; I merely addressed him in the common-place salutation. He looked hard and inquisitively at me, and then turned abruptly away. Lady Roseville had risen from her chair—her eyes followed him. He had thrown himself on a settee near the window. She went up to him, and sat herself by his side. I turned—my face burned—my heart beat—I was now next to Ellen Glanville; she was looking down, apparently employed with some engravings, but I thought her hand trembled.

There was a pause. Vincent was talking with the other occupiers of the table: a woman, at such times, is always the first to speak. "We have not seen you, Mr. Pelham," said Ellen, "since your return to town."

"I have been very ill," I answered, and I felt my voice falter. Ellen looked up anxiously at my face; I could not brook those large, deep, tender eyes, and it now became my turn to occupy myself with the prints.

"You *do* look pale," she said, in a low voice. I did not trust myself with a further remark—dissimulator as I was to others, I was like a guilty child before the woman I loved. There was another pause—at last Ellen said, "How do you think my brother looks?"

I started ; yes, he *was* her brother, and I was once more myself at that thought. I answered so coldly, and almost haughtily, that Ellen coloured, and said with some dignity that she

should join Lady Roseville. I bowed slightly, and she withdrew to the countess. I seized my hat and departed—but not utterly alone—I had managed to secrete the book which Ellen's hand had marked : through many a bitter day and sleepless night, that book has been my only companion : I have it before me now ; and it is open at a page which is yet blistered with the traces of former tears !

CHAPTER LXVIII.

— Our mistress is a little given to philosophy : what disputations shall we have her by and by?—GIL BLAS.

It was now but seldom that I met Ellen, for I went little into general society, and grew every day more engrossed in political affairs. Sometimes, however, when, wearied of myself, and my graver occupations, I yielded to my mother's solicitations, and went to one of the nightly haunts of the goddess we term *Pleasure*, and the Greeks *Moria*, the game of dissipation (to use a Spanish proverb) shuffled us together. It was then that I had the most difficult task of my life to learn and to perform; to check the lip—the eye—the soul—to heap curb on curb, upon the gushings of the heart, which daily and hourly yearned to overflow; and to feel, that while the mighty and restless tides of passion were thus fettered and restrained, all within was a parched and arid wilderness, that wasted itself, for want of very moisture, away. Yet there was something grateful in the sadness with which I watched her form in the dance, or listened to her voice in the song; and I felt soothed, and even happy, when my fancy flattered itself, that her step never now seemed so light, as it was wont to be when in harmony with mine, nor the songs that pleased her most, so gay as those that were formerly her choice.

Distant and unobserved, I loved to feed my eyes upon her pale and down-cast cheek; to note the abstraction that came over her at moments, even when her glance seemed brightest, and her lip most fluent; and to know, that while a fearful mystery might for ever forbid the union of our hands,

there was an invisible, but electric chain, which connected the sympathies of our hearts.

Ah! why is it, that the noblest of our passions should be also the most selfish?—that while we would make all earthly sacrifice for the one we love, we are perpetually demanding a sacrifice in return; that if we cannot have the rapture of blessing, we find a consolation in the power to afflict; and that we acknowledge, while we reprobate, the maxim of the sage: "*L'on veut faire tout le bonheur, ou, si cela ne se peut ainsi, tout le malheur de ce qu'on aime.*"*

The beauty of Ellen was not of that nature which rests solely upon the freshness of youth, nor even the magic of expression; it was as faultless as it was dazzling; no one could deny its excess or its perfection; her praises came constantly to my ear into whatever society I went. Say what we will of the power of love, it borrows greatly from opinion: pride, above all things, sanctions and strengthens affection. When all voices were united to panegyrisé her beauty,—when I knew, that the powers of her wit—the charms of her conversation—the accurate judgment, united to the sparkling imagination, were even more remarkable characteristics of her *mind*, than loveliness of her *person*, I could not but feel my ambition, as well as my tenderness,

* "One wishes to make all the happiness, or, if that is forbidden, all the unhappiness of the being we love."

excited: I dwelt with a double intensity on my choice, and with a tenfold bitterness on the obstacle which forbade me to indulge it.

Yet there was one circumstance, to which, in spite of all the evidence against Reginald, my mind still fondly and eagerly clung. In searching the pockets of the unfortunate Tyrrell, the money he had mentioned to me as being in his possession, could not be discovered. Had Glanville been the murderer, at all events he could not have been the robber. It was true that in the death scuffle, which in all probability took place, the money might have fallen from the person of the deceased, either among the long grass which grew rankly and luxuriantly around, or in the sullen and slimy pool, close to which the murder was perpetrated; it was also possible, that Thornton, knowing that the deceased had so large a sum about him, and not being aware that the circumstance had been communicated to me or any one else, might not have been able (when he and Dawson first went to the spot) to resist so great a temptation. However, there was a slight crevice in this fact, for a sunbeam of hope to enter, and I was too sanguine, by habitual temperament and present passion, not to turn towards it from the general darkness of my thoughts.

With Glanville I was often brought into immediate contact. Both united in the same party, and engaged in concerting the same measures, we frequently met in public, and sometimes even alone. However, I was invariably cold and distant, and Glanville confirmed rather than diminished my suspicions, by making no commentary on my behaviour, and imitating it in the indifference of his own. Yet, it was with a painful and aching heart, that I marked in his emaciated form and sunken cheek, the gradual, but certain progress of

disease and death; and while all England rang with the renown of the young, but almost unrivalled orator and both parties united in anticipating the certainty and brilliancy of his success, I felt how improbable it was, that, even if his crime escaped the unceasing vigilance of justice, this living world would long possess any traces of his genius but the remembrance of his name. There was something in his love of letters, his habits of luxury and expense, the energy of his mind—the solitude, the darkness, the hauteur, the reserve of his manners and life, which reminded me of the German Wallenstein; nor was he altogether without the superstition of that evil, but extraordinary man. It is true that he was not addicted to the romantic fables of astrology, but he was an earnest, though secret, advocate of the world of spirits. He did not utterly disbelieve the various stories of their return to earth and their visits to the living; and it would have been astonishing to me, had I been a less diligent observer of human inconsistencies, to mark a mind, otherwise so reasoning and strong, in this respect so credulous and weak; and to witness its reception of a belief, not only so adverse to ordinary reflection, but so absolutely contradictory to the philosophy it passionately cultivated, and the principles it obstinately espoused.

One evening, I, Vincent, and Clarendon, were alone at Lady Roseville's, when Reginald and his sister entered. I rose to depart; the beautiful Countess would not suffer it; and when I looked at Ellen, and saw her blush at my glance, the weakness of my heart conquered, and I remained.

Our conversation turned partly upon books, and principally on the science *du cœur et du monde*, for Lady Roseville was *un peu philosophe*,

as well as more than *un peu littéraire*; and her house, like those of the Du Deffands and D'Epinays of the old French régime, was one where serious subjects were cultivated, as well as the lighter ones; where it was the mode to treat no less upon *things* than to scandalise *persons*; and where maxims on men and reflections on manners were as much in their places, as strictures on the Opera and invitations to balls.

All who were now assembled were more or less suited to one another; all were people of the world, and yet occasional students of the closet; but all had a different method of expressing their learning or their observations. Clarendon was dry, formal, shrewd, and possessed of the suspicious philosophy common to men hackneyed in the world. Vincent relieved his learning by the quotation or metaphor, or originality of some sort, with which it was expressed. Lady Roseville seldom spoke much, but when she did, it was rather with grace than solidity. She was naturally melancholy and pensive, and her observations partook of the colourings of her mind; but she was also a *dame de la cour*, accustomed to conceal, and her language was gay and trifling, while the sentiments it clothed were pensive and sad.

Ellen Glanville was an attentive listener, but a diffident speaker. Though her knowledge was even masculine for its variety and extent, she was averse from displaying it; the childish, the lively, the tender, were the outward traits of her character—the flowers were above, but the mine was beneath; one noted the beauty of the first—one seldom dreamt of the value of the last.

Glanville's favourite method of expressing himself was terse and sententious. He did not love the labour of detail: he conveyed the knowledge of years in an axiom. Sometimes he

was fanciful, sometimes false; but, generally, dark, melancholy, and bitter.

As for me, I entered more into conversation at Lady Roseville's than I usually do elsewhere; being, according to my favourite philosophy, gay on the serious, and serious on the gay; and, perhaps, this is a juster method of treating the two than would be readily imagined: for things which are usually treated with importance, are, for the most part, deserving of ridicule; and those which we receive as trifles, swell themselves into a consequence we little dreamt of, before they depart.

Vincent took up a volume: it was Shelley's Posthumous Poems. "How fine," said he, "some of these are; but they are fine fragments of an architecture in bad taste: they are imperfect in themselves, and faulty in the school they belonged to; yet, such as they are, the master-hand is evident upon them. They are like the pictures of Paul Veronese—often offending the eye, often irritating the judgment, but breathing of something vast and lofty—their very faults are majestic;—this age, perhaps no other, will ever do them justice—but the disciples of future schools will make glorious pillage of their remains. The writings of Shelley would furnish matter for a hundred volumes; they are an admirable museum of ill-arranged curiosities—they are diamonds awkwardly set; but one of them, in the hands of a skilful jeweller, would be inestimable; and the poet of the future will serve him as Mercury did the tortoise in his own translation from Homer—make him 'sing sweetly when he's dead!' Their lyres will be made out of his *shell*."

"If I judge rightly," said Clarendon, "his literary faults were these; he was too learned in his poetry, and too poetical in his learning. Learning is the bane of a poet. Imagine how

beautiful Petrarch would be without his platonic conceits; fancy the luxuriant imagination of Cowley, left to run wild among the lofty objects of nature, not the minute peculiarities of art. Even Milton, who made a more graceful and gorgeous use of learning, than, perhaps, any other poet, would have been far more popular if he had been more familiar. Poetry is for the multitude—erudition for the few. In proportion as you mix them, erudition will gain in readers, and poetry lose.”

“True,” said Glanville; “and thus the poetical, among philosophers, are the most popular of their time; and the philosophical among poets, the least popular of theirs.”

“Take care,” said Vincent, smiling, “that we are not misled by the *point* of your deduction; the remark is true, but with a certain reservation, viz., that the philosophy which renders a poet less popular, must be the philosophy of *learning*, not of *wisdom*. Wherever it consists in the knowledge of the *plainer* springs of the heart, and not in *abstruse* inquiry into its metaphysical and hidden subtleties, it necessarily increases the popularity of the poem: because, instead of being limited to the few, it comes home to every one. Thus, it is the philosophy of Shakspeare, which puts him into every one’s hands and hearts—while that of Lucretius, wonderful poet as he is, makes us often throw down the book because it fatigues us with the scholar. Philosophy, therefore, only sins in poetry, when, in the severe garb of learning, it becomes ‘harsh and crabbed,’ and not ‘musical as is Apollo’s lute.’”

“Alas!” said I, “how much more difficult than of yore education is become: formerly, it had only one object—to acquire learning; and now, we have not only to acquire it, but to know what to do with it when we have—nay, there are not a few cases

where the very perfection of learning will be to *appear* ignorant.”

“Perhaps,” said Glanville, “the very perfection of *wisdom* may consist in *retaining* actual ignorance. Where was there ever the individual who, after consuming years, life, health, in the pursuit of science, rested satisfied with its success, or rewarded by its triumph? Common sense tells us that the best method of employing life is to *enjoy* it. Common sense tells us, also, the ordinary means of this enjoyment; health, competence, and the indulgence, but the *moderate* indulgence, of our passions. What have these to do with science?”

“I might tell you,” replied Vincent, “that I myself have been no idle no inactive seeker after the hidden treasures of mind; and that, from my own experience, I could speak of pleasure, pride, complacency, in the pursuit, that were no inconsiderable augmenters of my stock of enjoyment; but I have the candour to confess, also, that I have known disappointment, mortification, despondency of mind, and infirmity of body, that did more than balance the account. The fact is, in my opinion, that the individual is a sufferer for his toils, but then the mass is benefited by his success. It is we who reap, in idle gratification, what the husbandman has sown in the bitterness of labour. Genius did not save Milton from poverty and blindness—nor Tasso from the madhouse—nor Galileo from the inquisition; *they* were the sufferers, but posterity the gainers. The literary empire reverses the political; it is not the many made for one—it is the one made for many. Wisdom and Genius must have their martyrs as well as Religion, and with the same results, viz., *semen ecclesie est sanguis martyrum*. And this reflection must console us for their misfortunes, for, perhaps, it was sufficient to con-

sole *them*. In the midst of the most affecting passage in the most wonderful work, perhaps, ever produced, for the mixture of universal thought with individual interest—I mean the last two cantos of *Childe Harold*—the poet warms from himself at his hopes of being remembered

—————In his line
‘With his land’s language,’——

And who can read the noble and heart-speaking apology of Algernon Sydney, without entering into his consolation no less than his misfortunes? Speaking of the law being turned into a snare instead of a protection, and instancing its uncertainty and danger in the times of Richard the Second, he says, ‘God only knows what will be the issue of the like practices in these our days; perhaps He will in his mercy speedily visit his afflicted people; *I die in the faith that he will do it, though I know not the time or ways.*’”

“I love,” said Clarendon, “the enthusiasm which places comfort in so noble a source: but, is vanity, think you, a less powerful agent than philanthropy? Is it not the desire of shining before men that prompts us to whatever may effect it? and if it can *create*, can it not also *support*? I mean, that if you allow that to shine, to dazzle, to enjoy praise, is no ordinary incentive to the commencement of great works, the conviction of future success for this desire becomes no inconsiderable reward. Grant, for instance, that this desire produced the ‘*Paradise Lost*,’ and you will not deny that it might also support the poet through his misfortunes. Do you think that he thought rather of the pleasure *his* work should afford to posterity, than of the praises *posterity* should extend to his work? Had not Cicero left us such frank confessions of himself, how patriotic, how philanthropic we should

have esteemed him! Now we know both his motive and meed was vanity, may we not extend the knowledge of human nature which we have gained in this instance by applying it to others? For my part, I should be loth to inquire how large a quantum of vanity mingled with the haughty patriotism of Sydney, or the unconquered soul of Cato.”

Glanville bowed his head in approval.

“But,” observed I, ironically, “why be so uncharitable to this poor and persecuted principle, since none of you deny the good and great actions it effects; why stigmatise vanity as a vice, when it creates, or, at least, participates in, so many virtues? I wonder the ancients did not erect the choicest of their temples to its worship? As for me, I shall henceforth only speak of it as the *primum mobile* of whatever we venerate and admire, and shall think it the highest compliment I can pay to a man, to tell him *he is eminently vain!*”

“I incline to your opinion,” cried Vincent, laughing. “The reason we dislike vanity in others, is because it is perpetually hurting our own. Of all passions (if for the moment I may call it such) it is the most indiscreet; it is for ever blabbing out its own secrets. If it would but keep its counsel, it would be as graciously received in society, as any other well-dressed and well-bred intruder of quality. Its garrulity makes it despised. But in truth it must be clear, that vanity in itself is neither a vice nor a virtue, any more than this knife, in itself, is dangerous or useful; the person who employs gives it its qualities: thus, for instance, a great mind desires to shine, *or is vain*, in great actions; a frivolous one, in frivolities; and so on through the varieties of the human intellect. But I cannot agree with Mr. Clarendon that my admiration of Algernon Sydney (Cato I never *did* admire)

would be at all lessened by the discovery, that his resistance to tyranny in a great measure originated in vanity, or that the same vanity consoled him, when he fell a victim to that resistance; for what does it prove but this, that, among the various feelings of his soul, indignation at oppression (so common to all men)—enthusiasm for liberty, (so predominant in him)—the love of benefiting others—the noble pride of being, in death, consistent with himself; among all these feelings, among a crowd of others equally honourable and pure—there was also one, and perhaps no inconsiderable feeling, of desire that his life and death should be hereafter appreciated justly? Contempt of fame is the contempt of virtue. Never consider that vanity an offence which limits itself to wishing for the praise of good men for good actions: 'next to our own esteem,' says the best of the Roman philosophers, 'it is a virtue to desire the esteem of others.'

"By your emphasis on the word *esteem*," said Lady Roseville, "I suppose you attach some peculiar importance to the word?"

"I do," answered Vincent. "I use it in contra-distinction to *admiration*. We may covet general admiration for a *bad* action—for many bad actions have the *cliquant*, which passes for real gold—but one can expect general *esteem* only for a *good* one."

"From this distinction," said Ellen, modestly, "may we not draw an inference, which will greatly help us in our consideration of vanity; may we not deem that vanity which desires only the *esteem* of others, to be invariably a virtue, and that which only longs for *admiration* to be frequently a vice?"

"We *may* admit your inference," said Vincent; "and before I leave this question, I cannot help remarking upon the folly of the superficial, who

imagine, by studying human motives, that philosophers wish to depreciate human actions. To direct our admiration to a proper point, is surely not to destroy it: yet how angry inconsiderate enthusiasts are, when we assign real, in the place of exaggerated feelings. Thus the advocates for the doctrine of utility—the most benevolent, because the most indulgent, of all philosophies—are branded with the epithets of selfish and interested; decriers of moral excellence, and disbelievers in generous actions. Vice has no friend like the prejudices which call themselves virtue. *Le pretexte ordinaire de ceux qui font le malheur des autres est qu'ils veulent leur bien.*"*

My eyes were accidentally fixed on Glanville as Vincent ceased; he looked up, and coloured faintly as he met my look; but he did not withdraw his own—keenly and steadily we gazed upon each other, till Ellen, turning round suddenly, remarked the unwonted meaning of our looks, and placed her hand in her brother's, with a sort of fear.

It was late; he rose to withdraw, and passing me, said in a low tone, "A little while, and you shall know all." I made no answer—he left the room with Ellen.

"Lady Roseville has had but a dull evening, I fear, with our stupid saws and *ancient* instances," said Vincent. The eyes of the person he addressed were fixed upon the door; I was standing close by her, and, as the words struck her ear, she turned abruptly;—a tear fell upon my hand—she perceived it, and though I *would not* look upon her face, I saw that her very neck blushed; but she like me, if she gave way to feeling, had learned too deep a lesson from

* "The ordinary pretext of those who make the misery of others is, that they wish *their* good."

the world, not readily to resume her self-command ; she answered Vincent railing, upon his bad compliment to us, and received our adieus with all her customary grace, and more than her customary gaiety.

CHAPTER LXIX.

Ah ! Sir, had I but bestowed half the pains in learning a trade, that I have in learning to be a scoundrel, I might have been a rich man at this day ; but, rogue as I am, still I may be your friend, and that, perhaps, when you least expect it.—*Vicar of Wakefield.*

WHAT with the anxiety and uncertainty of my political prospects, the continued whirlpool in which I lived, and, above all, the unpropitious state of my *belle passion*, my health gave way ; my appetite forsook me—my sleep failed me—I lost my good looks, and my mother declared, that I should have no chance with an heiress ; all these circumstances together were not without their weight. So I set out one morning to Hampton Court, for the benefit of the country air.

It is by no means an unpleasant thing to turn one's back upon the great city in the height of its festivities. Misanthropy is a charming feeling for a short time, and one inhales the country, and animadverts on the town, with the most melancholy satisfaction in the world. I sat myself down at a pretty little cottage, a mile out of the town. From the window of my drawing-room I revelled in the luxuriant contemplation of three pigs, one cow, and a straw yard ; and I could get to the Thames in a walk of five minutes, by a short cut through a lime-kiln. Such pleasing opportunities of enjoying the beauties of nature, are not often to be met with : you may be sure, therefore, that I made the most of them. I rose early, walked before breakfast, for my health, and came back with a most satisfactory headache, for my pains. I read for just three hours, walked for two more, thought over Abernethy, dyspep-

sia, and blue pills, till dinner ; and absolutely forgot Lord Dawton, ambition, Guloseton, epicurism—ay, all but—of course, reader, you know whom I am about to except,—the ladye of my love. ✓

One bright, laughing day, I threw down my book an hour sooner than usual, and sallied out with a lightness of foot and exhilaration of spirit, to which I had long been a stranger. I had just sprung over a stile that led into one of those green shady lanes, which make us feel that the old poets who loved, and lived for nature, were right in calling our island “the merry England”—when I was startled by a short, quick bark, on one side of the hedge. I turned sharply round ; and, seated upon the sward, was a man, apparently of the pedlar profession ; a large deal box was lying open before him ; a few articles of linen, and female dress, were scattered round, and the man himself appeared earnestly occupied in examining the deeper recesses of his itinerant warehouse. A small black terrier flew towards me with no friendly growl. “Down,” said I : “all strangers are not foes—though the English generally think so.”

The man hastily looked up ; perhaps he was struck with the quaintness of my remonstrance to his canine companion ; for, touching his hat, civilly, he said—“The dog, Sir, is very quiet ; he only means to give *me* the alarm by giving it to *you* ; for dogs seem to have no despicable

insight into human nature, and know well that the best of us may be taken by surprise."

"You are a moralist," said I, not a little astonished in my turn by such an address from such a person. "I could not have expected to stumble upon a philosopher so easily. Have you any wares in your box likely to suit me? if so, I should like to purchase of so moralising a vendor!"

"No, Sir," said the seeming pedlar, smiling, and yet at the same time hurrying his goods into his box, and carefully turning the key—"no, Sir, I am only a bearer of other men's goods; my morals are all that I can call my own, and those I will sell you at your own price."

"You are candid, my friend," said I, "and your frankness, alone, would be inestimable in this age of deceit, and country of hypoerisy."

"Ah, Sir!" said my new acquaintance, "I see already that you are one of those persons who look to the dark side of things; for my part, I think the present age the best that ever existed, and our own country the most virtuous in Europe."

"I congratulate you, Mr. Optimist, on your opinions," quoth I; "but your observation leads me to suppose, that you are both an historian and a traveller: am I right?"

"Why," answered the box-bearer, "*I have* dabbled a little in books, and wandered *not* a little among men. I am just returned from Germany, and am now going to my friends in London. I am charged with this box of goods: Heaven send me the luck to deliver it safe!"

"Amen," said I; "and with that prayer and this trifle, I wish you a good morning."

"Thank you a thousand times, Sir, for both," replied the man—"but do add to your favours by informing me of the right road to the town of * * * *."

"I am going in that direction myself: if you choose to accompany me part of the way, I can ensure your not missing the rest."

"Your honour is too good!" returned he of the box, rising, and slinging his fardel across him—"it is but seldom that a gentleman of your rank will condescend to walk three paces with *one* of mine. You smile, Sir; perhaps you think I should not class myself among gentlemen; and yet I have as good a right to the name as most of the set. I belong to no trade—I follow no calling: I rove where I list, and rest where I please: in short, I know no occupation but my indolence, and no law but my will. Now, Sir, may I not call myself a gentleman?"

"Of a surety!" quoth I. "You seem to me to hold a middle rank between a half-pay captain and the king of the gipsies."

"You have hit it, Sir," rejoined my companion, with a slight laugh. He was now by my side, and as we walked on, I had leisure more minutely to examine him. He was a middle-sized, and rather athletic man, apparently about the age of thirty-eight. He was attired in a dark-blue frock coat, which was neither shabby nor new, but ill made, and much too large and long for its present possessor; beneath this was a faded velvet waistcoat, that had formerly, like the Persian ambassador's tunic, "blushed with crimson, and blazed with gold;" but which might now have been advantageously exchanged in Monmouth-street for the lawful sum of two shillings and ninepence; under this was an inner vest of the cashmere shawl pattern, which seemed much too new for the rest of the dress. Though his shirt was of a very unwashed hue, I remarked with some suspicion, that it was of a very respectable fineness; and a pin, which might be paste, or could be diamond, peeped

below a tattered and dingy black kid stock, like a gipsy's eye beneath her hair.

His trowsers were of a light grey, and the justice of Providence, or of the tailor, avenged itself upon them, for the prodigal length bestowed upon their ill-assorted companion, the coat; for they were much too tight for the muscular limbs they concealed, and, rising far above the ankle, exhibited the whole of a thick Wellington boot, which was the very picture of Italy upon the map.

The face of the man was commonplace and ordinary; one sees a hundred such, every day, in Fleet-street or on the 'Change: the features were small, irregular, and somewhat flat: yet when you looked twice upon the countenance, there was something marked and singular in the expression, which fully atoned for the commonness of the features. The right eye turned away from the left, in that watchful squint which seems constructed on the same considerate plan as those Irish guns, made for shooting round a corner; his eyebrows were large and shaggy, and greatly resembled bramble bushes, in which his fox-like eyes had taken refuge. Round these vulpine retreats was a labyrinthine maze of those wrinkles, vulgarly called crow's-feet; deep, intricate, and intersected, they seemed for all the world like the web of a Chancery suit. Singular enough, the rest of the countenance was perfectly smooth and unindented; even the lines from the nostril to the corners of the mouth, usually so deeply traced in men of his age, were scarcely more apparent than in a boy of eighteen.

His smile was frank—his voice clear and hearty—his address open, and much superior to his apparent rank of life, claiming somewhat of equality, yet conceding a great deal of respect; but, notwithstanding all

these certainly favourable points, there was a sly and cunning expression in his perverse and vigilant eye and all the wrinkled demesnes in its vicinity, that made me mistrust even while I liked my companion; perhaps, indeed, he was too frank, too familiar, too *déjà-gé*, to be quite natural. Your honest men may soon buy reserve by experience. Rogues are communicative and open, because confidence and openness costs them nothing. To finish the description of my new acquaintance, I should observe that there was something in his countenance, which struck me as not wholly unfamiliar; it was one of those which we have not, in all human probability, seen before, and yet, which (perhaps, from their very commonness) we imagine we have encountered a hundred times.

We walked on briskly, notwithstanding the warmth of the day; in fact, the air was so pure, the grass so green, the laughing noon-day so full of the hum, the motion, and the life of creation, that the feeling produced was rather of that freshness and vigoriation, than of languor and heat.

"We have a beautiful country, Sir," said my hero of the box. "It is like walking through a garden after the more sterile and sullen features of the Continent. A pure mind, Sir, loves the country; for my part, I am always disposed to burst out in thanksgiving to Providence when I behold its works, and like the valleys in the psalm, I am ready to laugh and sing."

"An enthusiast," said I, "as well as a philosopher! perhaps (and I believed it likely). I have the honour of addressing a poet also."

"Why, Sir," replied the man, "I have made verses in my life; in short, there is little I have not done, for I was always a lover of variety; but, perhaps, your honour will let me return the suspicion. Are you not a favourite of the muse?"

"I cannot say that I am," said I. "I value myself only on my common sense—the very antipodes to genius, you know, according to the orthodox belief."

"Common sense!" repeated my companion, with a singular and meaning smile, and a twinkle with his left eye. "Common sense! Ah, that is not my *forte*, Sir. You, I dare say, are one of those gentlemen whom it is very difficult to take in, either passively or actively, by appearance, or in act! For my part, I have been a dupe all my life—a child might cheat me! I am the most unsuspicious person in the world."

"Too candid by half," thought I. "The man is certainly a rascal: but what is that to me! I shall never see him again:" and, true to my love of never losing sight of an opportunity of ascertaining individual character, I observed that I thought such an acquaintance very valuable, especially if he were in trade; it was a pity, therefore, for my sake, that my companion had informed me that he followed no calling.

"Why, Sir," said he, "I am, occasionally in employment; my nominal profession is that of a broker. I buy shawls and handkerchiefs of poor countesses, and retail them to rich piebeians. I fit up new-married couples with linen, at a more moderate rate than the shops, and procure the bridegroom his present of jewels, at forty per cent. less than the jewellers; nay, I am as friendly to an intrigue as a marriage; and when I cannot sell my jewels, I will my good offices. A gentleman so handsome as your honour, may have an affair upon your hands: if so you may rely upon my secrecy and zeal. In short, I am an innocent, good-natured fellow, who does harm to no one for nothing, and good to every one for something."

"I admire your code," quoth I, "and whenever I want a mediator

between Venus and myself, will employ you. Have you always followed your present idle profession, or were you brought up to any other?"

"I was intended for a silversmith," answered my friend, "but Providence willed it otherwise; they taught me from childhood to repeat the Lord's prayer; Heaven heard me, and delivered me from temptation—there is, indeed, something terribly seducing in the face of a silver spoon!"

"Well," said I, "you are the honestest knave I ever met, and one would trust you with one's purse for the ingenuousness with which you own you would steal it. Pray, think you it is probable that I have ever had the happiness to meet you before? I cannot help fancying so—yet as I have never been in the watch-house, or the Old Bailey, my reason tells me that I must be mistaken."

"Not at all, Sir," returned my worthy: "I remember you well, for I never saw a face like yours that I did not remember. I had the honour of sipping some British liquors, in the same room with yourself one evening; you were then in company with my friend Mr. Gordon."

"Ha!" said I, "I thank you for the hint. I now remember well, by the same token, he told me that you were the most ingenious gentleman in England; and that you had a happy propensity of mistaking other people's possessions for your own. I congratulate myself upon so desirable an acquaintance."—

My friend, who was indeed no other than Mr. Job Jonson, smiled with his usual blandness, and made me a low bow of acknowledgment before he resumed:—

"No doubt, Sir, Mr. Gordon informed you right. I flatter myself few gentlemen understand better than myself, the art of *appropriation*; though I say it who should not say it, I deserve the reputation I have acquired.

Sir, I have always had ill fortune to struggle against, and have always remedied it by two virtues—perseverance and ingenuity. To give you an idea of my ill fortune, know that I have been taken up twenty-three times, on suspicion; of my perseverance, know that twenty-three times I have been taken up *justly*; and of my ingenuity, know that I have been twenty-three times let off, because there was not a tittle of legal evidence against me!”

“I venerate your talents, Mr. Jonson,” replied I, “if by the name of Jonson it pleaseth you to be called, although, like the heathen deities, I presume that you have many titles, whereof some are more grateful to your ears than others.”

“Nay,” answered the man of two virtues—“I am never ashamed of my name; indeed, I have never done any thing to disgrace me. I have never indulged in low company, nor profligate debauchery; whatever I have executed by way of profession, has been done in a superior and artist-like manner; not in the rude bungling fashion of other adventurers. Moreover, I have always had a taste for polite literature, and went once as an apprentice to a publishing bookseller, for the sole purpose of reading the new works before they came out. In fine, I have never neglected any opportunity of improving my mind; and the worst that can be said against me is, that I have remembered my catechism, and taken all possible pains ‘to learn and labour truly, to get my living, and do my duty in that state of life, to which it has pleased Providence to call me.’”

“I have often heard,” answered I, “that there is *honour* among thieves; I am happy to learn from you, that there is also religion: your baptismal sponsors must be proud of so diligent a godson.”

“They ought to be, Sir,” replied

Mr. Jonson, “for I gave *them* the first specimens of my address: the story is long, but if you ever give me an opportunity, I will relate it.”

“Thank you,” said I; “meanwhile I must wish you a good morning; your road now lies to the right. I return you my best thanks for your condescension in accompanying so undistinguished an individual as myself.”

“Oh, never mention it, your honour,” rejoined Mr. Jonson. “I am always too happy to walk with a gentleman of your ‘common sense.’ Farewell, Sir; may we meet again.”

So saying, Mr. Jonson struck into his new road, and we parted.*

I went home, musing on my adventure, and delighted with my adventurer. When I was about three paces from the door of my home, I was accosted, in a most pitiful tone, by a poor old beggar, apparently in the last extreme of misery and disease. Notwithstanding my political economy, I was moved into alms-giving by a spectacle so wretched. I put my hand into my pocket, my purse was gone; and, on searching the other, lo—my handkerchief, my pocket-book, and a gold locket, which had belonged to Madame d’Anville, had vanished too—

One does not keep company with men of two virtues, and receive compliments upon one’s common sense, for nothing!

The beggar still continued to importune me.

“Give him some food and half a crown,” said I, to my landlady. Two hours afterwards, she came up to me—“Oh, Sir, my silver tea-pot—that *villain the beggar!*”

A light flashed upon me—“Ah, Mr. Job Jonson! Mr. Job Jonson!”

* If any one should think this sketch from nature exaggerated, I refer him to the “Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux.”

cried I, in an indescribable rage; "out of my sight, woman! out of my sight!" I stopped short; my speech failed me. Never tell me that shame is the companion of guilt—the sinful knave is never so ashamed of himself as is the innocent fool who suffers by him.

CHAPTER LXX.

Then must I plunge again into the crowd,
And follow all that peace disdains to seek.—BYRON.

IN the quiet of my retreat I remained for eight days—during which time I never looked once at a newspaper—imagine how great was my philosophy! On the ninth, I began to think it high time for me to hear from Dawton; and finding that I had eaten two rolls for breakfast, and that certain untimely wrinkles began to assume a more mitigated appearance, I be-thought me once more of the "Beauties of Babylon."

While I was in this kindly mood towards the great city and its inhabitants, my landlady put two letters in my hand—one was from my mother, the other from Guloseton. I opened the latter first; it ran thus—

"DEAR PELHAM,

"I was very sorry to hear you had left town—and so unexpectedly too. I obtained your address at Mivart's, and hasten to avail myself of it. Pray come to town immediately. I have received some *cherreuil* as a present, and long for your opinion; it is too nice to keep for all things me were made but to grow bad when nicest: as Moore, I believe, says of flowers, substituting sweet and fleetest, for bad and nicest; so, you see, you must come without loss of time.

"But you, my friend—how can you possibly have been spending your time? I was kept awake all last night, by thinking what you *could* have for dinner. Fish is out of the

question in the country; chickens die of the pip everywhere but in London; game is out of season: it is impossible to send to Giblett's for meat; it is equally impossible to get it anywhere else; and as for the only two natural productions of the country, vegetables and eggs, I need no extraordinary penetration to be certain that your cook cannot *transmute* the latter into an *omelette aux huîtres*, nor the former into *légumes à la crème*.

"Thus you see, by a series of undeniable demonstrations, you *must* absolutely be in a state of starvation. At this thought the tears rush into my eyes: for Heaven's sake, for my sake, for your own sake, but *above all*, for the sake of the *cherreuil*, hasten to London. I figure you to myself in the last stage of atrophy—airy as a trifle, thin as the ghost of a greyhound.

"I need say no more on the subject. I may rely on your own discretion to procure me the immediate pleasure of your company. Indeed, were I to dwell longer on your melancholy situation, my feelings would overcome me.—*Mais revenons à nos moutons*. (a most pertinent phrase, by the bye—oh! the French excel us in everything from the paramount science of cookery, to the little art of conversation.)

"You must tell me your candid, your unbiassed, your deliberate opinion of *cherreuil*. For my part, should not wonder at the mythology of the northern heathen nations, which

places hunting among the chief enjoyments of their heaven, were *chevreuil* the object of their chase; but *nil est omni parte beatum*;—it wants *fat*, my dear Pelham, it wants fat: nor do I see how to remedy this defect; for were we by art to supply the *fat*, we should deprive ourselves of the *flavour* bestowed by nature; and this, my dear Pelham, was always my great argument for liberty. Cooped, chained, and confined in cities, and slavery, all things lose the fresh and *generous tastes*, which it is the peculiar blessing of freedom and the country to afford.

"Tell me, my friend, what has been the late subject of your reflections? *My* thoughts have dwelt, much and seriously, on the 'terra incognita,' the undiscovered tracts in the *pays culinaire*, which the profoundest investigators have left untouched and unexplored in—*real*. But more of this hereafter;—the lightness of a letter is ill suited to the depths of philosophical research.

"Lord Dawton sounded me upon my votes yesterday. 'A thousand pities too,' said he, 'that *you* never speak in the House of Lords.'—'*Orator* fit,' said I—'*orators are subject to apoplexy*.'

"Adieu, my dear friend, for friend you are, if the philosopher was right in defining true friendship to consist in liking and disliking the same things. You hate parsnips *au naturel*—so do I; you love *pâtés de foie gras*, *et moi aussi*:—*nous voilà donc les meilleurs amis du monde!*

"GULOSETON."

So much for my friend, thought I—and now for my mother—opening the maternal epistle, which I herewith transcribe:—

"MY DEAR HENRY,

"Lose no time in coming to town. Every day the ministers are filling up the minor places, and it requires a

great stretch of recollection in a politician to remember the absent. Mr. V—— said yesterday, at a dinner party where I was present, that Lord Dawton had promised him the Borough of ——. Now you know, my dear Henry, that was the very borough he promised to you: you must see further into this. Lord Dawton is a good sort of man enough, but refused once to fight a duel; therefore, if he has disregarded his honour in one instance, he may do so in another: at all events, you have no time to lose.

"The young Duke of —— gives a ball to-morrow evening: Mrs. —— pays all the expenses, and I know for a certainty that she will marry him in a week; this as yet is a secret. There will be a great mixture, but the ball will be worth going to. I have a card for you.

"Lady Huffemall and I think that we shall not patronise the future duchess; but have not yet made up our minds. Lady Roseville, however, speaks of the intended match with great respect, and says that since we admit *covenance*, as the chief rule in matrimony, she never remembers an instance in which it has been more consulted.

"There are to be several promotions in the peerage. Lord ——'s friends wish to give out that he will have a dukedom; *mais j'en doute*. However, he has well deserved it; for he not only gives the best dinners in town, but the best account of them in the Morning Post afterwards; which I think is very properly upholding the dignity of our order.

"I hope most earnestly that you do not (in your country retreat) neglect your health; nor, I may add, your mind; and that you take an opportunity every other day of practising waltzing, which you can very well do with the help of an arm-chair. I would send you down (did I not

expect you here so soon) Lord Mount E——'s 'Musical Reminiscences;' not only because it is a very entertaining book, but because I wish you to pay much greater attention to music than you seem inclined to do. * * * * who is never very refined in his *bons mots*, says that Lord M. seems to have considered the world a concert, in which the best performer plays first fiddle. It is, indeed, quite delightful to see the veneration our musical friend has for the orchestra and its occupants. I wish to heaven, my dear Henry, he could instil into you a little of his ardour. I am quite mortified at times by your ignorance of tunes and operas: nothing tells better in conversation than a knowledge of music, as you will one day or other discover.

"God bless you, my dearest Henry. Fully expecting you, I have sent to engage your former rooms at Mivart's; do not let me be disappointed.

"Yours, &c.

"F. P."

I read the above letter twice over, and felt my cheek glow and my heart swell as I passed the passage relative to Lord Dawton and the borough. The new minister had certainly, for some weeks since, been playing a double part with me: it would long ago have been easy to procure me a subordinate situation—still easier to place me in parliament; yet he had contented himself with doubtful promises and idle civilities. What, however, seemed to me most unaccountable was, his motive in breaking or paltering with his engagement: he knew that I had served him and his party better than half his corps; he professed, not only to me, but to society, the highest opinion of my abilities, knowledge, and application: he saw, consequently, how serviceable I could be as a friend; and, from the same qualities, joined to the rank of my

birth and connections, and the high and resentful temper of my mind, he might readily augur that I could be equally influential as a foe.

With this reflection, I stilled the beating of my heart, and the fever of my pulse. I crushed the obnoxious letter in my hand, walked thrice up and down the room, paused at the bell—rang it violently—ordered post horses instantly, and in less than an hour was on the road to London.

How different is the human mind, according to the difference of place! In our passions, as in our creeds, we are the mere dependents of geographical situation. Nay, the trifling variation of a single mile will revolutionise the whole tides and torrents of our hearts. The man who is meek, generous, benevolent, and kind, in the country, enters the scene of contest, and becomes forthwith fiery or mean, selfish or stern, just as if the virtues were only for solitude, and the vices for the city. I have ill expressed the above reflection; *n'importe*—so much the better shall I explain my feelings at the time I speak of—for I was then too eager and engrossed to attend to the niceties of words. On my arrival at Mivart's I scarcely allowed myself time to change my dress before I set out to Lord Dawton. He shall afford me an explanation, I thought, or a recompense, or a *revange*. I knocked at the door—the minister was out. "Give him this card," said I to the porter, "and say I shall call to-morrow at three."

I walked to Brookes's—there I met Mr. V——. My acquaintance with him was small; but he was a man of talent, and, what was more to my purpose, of open manners. I went up to him, and we entered into conversation. "Is it true," said I, "that I am to congratulate you upon the certainty of your return for Lord Dawton's borough of ——?"

"I believe so," replied V——.

"Lord Dawton engaged it to me last week, and Mr. H—, the present member, has accepted the Chiltern Hundreds. You know all our family support Lord Dawton warmly in the present crisis, and my return for this borough was materially insisted upon. Such things are, you see, Mr. Pelham, even in these virtuous days of parliamentary purity."

"True," said I, dissembling my chagrin, "yourself and Dawton have made an admirable exchange. Think you the ministry can be said to be fairly seated?"

"By no means; every thing depends upon the motion of —, brought on next week. Dawton looks to that as to the decisive battle for this session."

Lord Gavelton now joined us, and I sauntered away with the utmost (seeming) indifference. At the top of St. James's-street, Lady Roseville's well-known carriage passed me—she stopped for a moment. "We shall meet at the Duke of —'s to-night," said she, "shall we not?"

"If *you* go—certainly," I replied.

I went home to my solitary apartment; and if I suffered somewhat of the torments of baffled hope and foiled ambition, the pang is not for the spectator. My lighter moments are for the world—my deeper for myself; and, like the Spartan boy, I would keep, even in the pangs of death, a mantle over the teeth and fangs which were fastening upon my breast.

CHAPTER LXXI.

— Nocet empta dolore voluptas.—OVID.

THE *first* person I saw at the Duke of —'s was Mr. Mivart—he officiated as gentleman usher: the *second* was my mother—she was, as usual, surrounded by men, “the shades of heroes that have been,” remnants of a former day, when the feet of the young and fair Lady Frances were as light as her head, and she might have rivalled, in the science *de la danse*, even the graceful Duchess of B—d. Over the dandies of her own time she still preserved her ancient empire; and it was amusing enough to hear the address of the *ci-devant jeunes hommes*, who continued, through habit, the compliments began thirty years since through admiration.

My mother was, indeed, what the world calls a very charming, agreeable woman. Few persons were more popular in society: her manners were perfection—her smile enchantment: she lived, moved, breathed, only for the world, and the world was not ungrateful for the constancy of her devotion. Yet, if her letters have given my readers any idea of her character, they will perceive that the very desire of supremacy in *ton*, gave (Heaven forgive my filial impiety!) a sort of demi-vulgarism to her ideas; for they who live wholly for the opinion of others, always want that self-lignity which alone confers a high cast upon the sentiments; and the most really unexceptionable in mode, are frequently the least genuinely patrician in mind.

I joined the maternal party, and Lady Frances soon took an opportunity of whispering, “You are looking

very well, and very handsome; I declare you are *not* unlike me, especially about the eyes. I have just heard that Miss Glanville will be a great heiress, for poor Sir Reginald cannot live much longer. She is here to-night; pray do not lose the opportunity.”

My cheek burned like fire at this speech, and my mother, quietly observing that I had a beautiful colour, and ought therefore *immediately* to find out Miss Glanville, lest it should vanish by the least delay, turned from me to speak of a public breakfast about shortly to be given. I passed into the dancing-room; there I found Vincent; he was in unusually good spirits.

“Well,” said he, with a sneer, “you have not taken your seat yet. I suppose Lord Dawton’s representative, whose place you are to supply, is like Theseus; *sedet in aternumque sedebit*. A thousand pities you can’t come in before next week; we shall then have fiery *motions* in the *Lower House*, as the astrologers say.”

I smiled. “*Ah mon cher!*” said I. “Sparta hath many a worthier son than me! Meanwhile, how get on the noble Lords Lesborough and Lincoln? ‘sure such a pair were never seen, so justly formed to meet by nature!’”

“Pooh!” said Vincent, coarsely, “they shall get *on* well enough, before you get *in*. Look to yourself, and remember that ‘Caesar plays the ingrate.’”

Vincent turned away; my eyes were rivetted on the ground; the beautiful

Lady — passed by me : “ What, you in a reverie ? ” said she, laughing ; “ our very host will turn thoughtful next ! ”

“ Nay,” said I, “ in your absence would you have me glad ? However, if Moore’s mythology be true—Beauty loves Folly the better for borrowing something from Reason ; but, come, this is a place not for the grave, but the *giddy*. Let us join the waltzers.”

“ I am engaged.”

“ I know it ! Do you think I would dance with any woman who was *not* engaged !—there would be no triumph to one’s vanity in that case. *Allons*, you *must* prefer me to an engagement ; ” and so saying, I led off my prize.

Her intended partner was Mr. V— ; just as we had joined the dancers, he spied us out, and approached with his long, serious, respectful face : the music struck *up*, and the next moment poor V— was very nearly struck *down*. Fraught with the most political spite, I whirled up against him ; apologised with my blandest smile, and left him wiping his mouth, and rubbing his shoulder, the most forlorn picture of Hope in adversity, that can possibly be conceived.

I soon grew weary of my partner, and, leaving her to fate, rambled into another room. There, seated alone, was Lady Roseville. I placed myself beside her ; there was a sort of freemasonry between her and myself ; each knew something more of the other than the world did, and read his or her heart, by other signs than words. I soon saw that she was in no mirthful mood : so much the better—she was the fitter companion for a baffled aspirant like me.

The room we were in was almost deserted, and finding ourselves uninterrupted, the stream of our conversation flowed into sentiment.

“ How little,” said Lady Roseville, “ can the crowd know of the individuals

who compose it ! As the most opposite colours may be blended into one, and so lose their individual hues, and be classed under a single name, so every one here will go home, and speak of the ‘ *gay scene*,’ without thinking for a moment, how many breaking hearts may have composed it.”

“ I have often thought,” said I, “ how harsh we are in our judgments of others—how often we accuse those persons of being worldly, who merely seem so to the world. Who, for instance, that saw you in your brightest moments, would ever suppose that you could make the confession you have just made ? ”

“ I would *not* make such a confession to many beside yourself,” answered Lady Roseville. “ Nay, you need not thank me. I am some years older than you ; I have lived longer in the world ; I have seen much of its various characters ; and my experience has taught me to penetrate and prize a character like yours. While you seem frivolous to the superficial, I know you to have a mind not only capable of the most solid and important affairs, but habituated by reflection to consider them. You appear effeminate, I know that none are more daring—indolent, none are more actively ambitious—utterly selfish, and I know that no earthly interest could bribe you into meanness or injustice—no, nor even into a venial dereliction of principle. It is from this estimate of your character, that I am frank and open to you. Besides, I recognise something in the careful pride with which you conceal your higher and deeper feelings, resembling the strongest actuating principle in my own mind. All this interests me warmly in your fate ; may it be as bright as my presentiments forebode ! ”

I looked into the beautiful face of the speaker as she concluded ; perhaps, at that solitary moment, my heart was unfaithful to Ellen, but the

✓ infidelity passed away like the breath from the mirror. Coxcomb as I was, I knew well how passionless was the interest expressed for me. Rover as I had been, I knew also, how pure may be the friendship of a woman,—*provided she loves another!*

I thanked Lady Roseville, warmly, for her opinion. "Perhaps," I added, "dared I solicit your advice, you would not find me wholly undeserving of your esteem."

"My advice," answered Lady Roseville, "would be, indeed, worse than useless, were it not regulated by a certain knowledge which, perhaps, you do not possess. You seem surprised. *Eh bien*; listen to me—are you not in no small degree *lié* with Lord Dawton?—do you not expect something from him worthy of your rank and merit?"

"You do, indeed, surprise me," said I. "However close my connection with Lord Dawton may be, I thought it much more secret than it appears to be. However, I own that I have a right to expect from Lord Dawton, not, perhaps, a recompense of service, but, at least, a fulfilment of promises. In this expectation I begin to believe I shall be deceived."

✓ "You will!" answered Lady Roseville. "Bend your head lower—the walls have ears. You have a friend, an unwearied and earnest friend, with those now in power; directly he heard that Mr. V—— was promised the borough, which he knew had been long engaged to you, he went straight to Lord Dawton. He found him with Lord Clandonald; however, he opened the matter immediately. He spoke with great warmth of your claims—he did more—he incorporated them with his own, which are of no mean order, and asked no other recompense for himself than the fulfilment of a long-made promise to you. Dawton was greatly confused, and Lord Clandonald replied, for him,

that certainly there was no denying your talents—that they were very great—that you had, unquestionably, been of much service to their party, and that, consequently, it must be politic to attach you to their interests; but that there was a certain *fierté*, and assumption, and he might say (mark the climax) *independence* about you, which could not but be highly displeasing in one so young; moreover, that it was impossible to trust to you—that you pledged yourself to no party—that you spoke only of conditions and terms—that you treated the proposal of placing you in Parliament rather as a matter of favour on your part than on Lord Dawton's—and, in a word, that there was no relying upon you. Lord Dawton then took courage, and chimed in, with a long panegyric on V——, and a long account of what was due to him, and to the zeal of his family: adding, that, in a crisis like this, it was absolutely necessary to engage a certain support; that, for his part, if he placed you in Parliament, he thought you quite as likely to prove a foe as a friend; that, owing to the marriage of your uncle, your expectations were by no means commensurate with your presumption, and that the same talents which made your claims to favour as an ally, created also no small danger in placing you in any situation where you could become hurtful as an enemy. All this, and much more to the same purpose, was strenuously insisted upon by the worthy pair; and your friend was obliged to take his leave, perfectly convinced that, unless you assumed a more complaisant bearing, or gave a more decided pledge, to the new minister, it was hopeless for you to expect anything from him, at least, for the present. The fact is, he stands too much in awe of you, and would rather keep you out of the House than contribute an

iota towards obtaining you a seat. Upon all this you may rely as certain."

"I thank you from my heart," said / warmly, seizing and pressing Lady Roseville's hand. "You tell me what I have long suspected; I am now upon my guard, and they shall find that I can *offend* as well as *defend*. But it is no time for me to boast; oblige me by informing me of the name of my unknown friend; I little thought there was a being in the world who would stir three steps for Henry Pelham."

"That friend," replied Lady Roseville, with a faltering voice and a glowing cheek, "was Sir Reginald Glanville."

"What!" cried I, "repeat the name to me again, or—" I paused, and recovered myself. "Sir Reginald Glanville," I resumed haughtily, "is too gracious to enter into my affairs. I must be strangely altered if I need the officious zeal of *any* intermeddler to redress my wrongs."

"Nay, Mr. Pelham," said the countess, hastily, "you do Glanville—*you*"

do yourself injustice. For him, *there* never passes a day in which he does not mention you with the highest encomiums and the most affectionate regard. He says of late, that you have altered towards him, but that he is not surprised at the change—he never mentions the cause; if I am not intruding, suffer me to inquire into it; perhaps (oh! how happy it would make me) I may be able to reconcile you; if you knew—if you could but guess half of the noble and lofty character of Reginald Glanville, you would suffer no petty difference to divide you."

"It is no *petty* difference," said I, rising, "nor am I permitted to mention the cause. Meanwhile, may God bless you, dearest Lady Roseville, and preserve that kind and generous heart from *worse* pangs than those of disappointed ambition, or betrayed trust."

Lady Roseville looked down—her bosom heaved violently; she felt the meaning of my words. I left her and returned home.

CHAPTER LXXII.

Good Mr. Knave, give me my due,
 I like a tart as well as you;
 But I would starve on good roast beef,
 Ere I would look so like a thief.—*The Queen of Hearts*

—Nunc vino pellite curas :
 Cras ingens iterabimus æquor.—*Hor.*

THE next morning I received a note from Guloaseton, asking me to dine with him at eight, to *meet* his *chevreuil*. I sent back an answer in the affirmative, and then gave myself wholly up to considering what was the best line of conduct to pursue with regard to Lord Dawton. "It would be pleasant enough," said Anger, "to go to him to ask him boldly for the borough so often pledged to you, and, in case of his refusal, to confront, to taunt, and to break with him." "True," replied that more homely and less stage-effect arguer, which we term Knowledge of the World; "but this would be neither useful nor dignified—common sense never quarrels with any one. Call upon Lord Dawton, if you will—ask him for his promise, with your second-best smile, and receive his excuses with your very best. Then do as you please—break with him or not—you can do either with grace and quiet; never make a scene about anything—reproach and anger always *do* make a scene." "Very true," said I, in answer to the latter suggestion—and having made up my mind, I repaired a quarter before three to Lord Dawton's house.

"Ah, Pelham," said the little minister, "delighted to see you look so much the better from the country air; you will stay in town now, I hope, till the end of the season?"

"Certainly, Lord Dawton, or, at all events, till the prorogation of Parlia-

ment; how, indeed, could I do otherwise, with your lordship's kind promise before my eyes? Mr. —, the member for your borough of —, has, I believe, accepted the Chiltern Hundreds! I feel truly obliged to you for so promptly fulfilling your promise to me."

"Hem! my dear Pelham, hem!" murmured Lord Dawton. I bent forward as if in the attitude of listening respect, but really the more clearly to perceive, and closely to enjoy his confusion. He looked up and caught my eye, and not being too much gratified with its involuntary expression, he grew more and more embarrassed; at last he summoned courage.

"Why, my dear Sir," he said, "I did, it is true, promise you that borough; but individual friendship must frequently be sacrificed to the public good. All our party insisted upon returning Mr. V—— in place of the late member: what could I do? I mentioned your claims; they all, to a man, enlarged upon your rival's: to be sure he *is* an older person, and his family is very powerful in the Lower House: in short, you perceive, my dear Pelham—that is, you are aware—you can feel for the delicacy of my situation—one could not appear too eager for one's own friends at first, and I was *forced* to concede."

Lord Dawton was now fairly delivered of his speech; it was, therefore,

only left me to congratulate him on his offspring.

"My dear lord," I began, "you could not have pleased me better: Mr. V—— is a most estimable man, and I would not, for the world, have had you suspected of placing such a trifle as your own honour—that is to say—your promise to me, before the commands—that is to say the interests—of your party; but no more of this now. Was your lordship at the Duke of ——'s last night?"

Dawton seized joyfully the opportunity of changing the conversation, and we talked and laughed on indifferent matters till I thought it time to withdraw; this I did with the most cordial appearance of regard and esteem; nor was it till I had fairly set my foot out of his door, that I suffered myself to indulge the "black bile" at my breast. I turned towards the Green Park, and was walking slowly along the principal mall with my hands behind me, and my eyes on the ground, when I heard my own name uttered. On looking back, I perceived Lord Vincent on horseback; he stopped and conversed with me. In the humour I was in with Lord Dawton, I received him with greater warmth than I had done of late; and he also, being in a social mood, seemed so well satisfied with our *rencontre*, and my behaviour, that he dismounted to walk with me.

"This park is a very different scene now," said Vincent, "from what it was in the times of 'The Merry Monarch;' yet it is still a spot much more to my taste than its more gaudy and less classical brother of Hyde. There is something pleasingly melancholy, in walking over places haunted by history; for all of us live more in the past than the present."

"And how exactly alike in all ages," said I, "men have been. On the very spot we are on now, how many have been actuated by the same

feelings that now actuate us—how many have made perhaps exactly the same remark just made by you! It is this universal identity, which forms our most powerful link with those that have been—there is a satisfaction in seeing how closely we resemble the Agamemnons of gone times, and we take care to lose none of it, by thinking how closely we also resemble the Thersites."

"True," replied Vincent: "if wise and great men did but know how little difference there is between them and the foolish or the mean, they would not take such pains to be wise and great; to use the Chinese proverb, 'they sacrifice a picture, to get possession of its ashes.' It is almost a pity that the desire to advance should be so necessary to our being; ambition is often a fine, but never a felicitous feeling. Cyprian, in a beautiful passage on envy, calls it 'the moth of the soul:' but perhaps, even that passion is less gnawing, less a '*tibes pectoris*,' than ambition. You are surprised at my heat—the fact is, I am enraged at thinking how much we forfeit, when we look up only, and trample unconsciously, in the blindness of our aspiration, on the affections which strew our path. Now, you and I have been utterly estranged from each other of late. Why?—for any dispute—any disagreement in private—any discovery of meanness—treachery, unworthiness in the other? No! merely because I dine with Lord Lincoln, and you with Lord Dawton, *voilà tout*. Well say the Jesuits, that they who live for the public must renounce all private ties; the very day we become citizens we are to cease to be men. Our privacy is like *Leo Decimus*; directly it dies, all peace, comfort, joy, and sociality are to die with it: and an iron age, '*barbara vis et dira malorum omnium incommoda*' to succeed."

"It is a pity that we struck into

different paths," said I: "no pleasure would have been to me greater than making our political interests the same; but—"

"Perhaps there is *no* but," interrupted Vincent; "perhaps, like the two knights in the hackneyed story, we are only giving different names to the same shield, because we view it on different sides; let us also imitate them in their reconciliation, as well as their quarrel, and since we have already run our lances against each other, be convinced of our error, and make up our difference."

I was silent; indeed, I did not like to trust myself to speak. Vincent continued:—

"I know," said he, "and it is in vain for you to conceal it, that you have been ill-used by Dawton. Mr. V—— is my first cousin; he came to me the day after the borough was given to him, and told me all that Clandonald and Dawton had said to him at the time. Believe me, they did not spare *you*;—the former you have grievously offended; you know that he has quarrelled irremediably with his son Dartmore, and he insists that you are the friend and abettor of that ingenuous youth, in all his debaucheries and extravagance—*tu illum corrumpi sinis*. I tell you this without hesitation, for I know you are less vain than ambitious, and I do not care about hurting you in the one point, if I advance you in the other. As for me, I own to you candidly and frankly, that there are no pains I would spare to secure you to our party. Join us, and you shall, as I have often said, be on the parliamentary benches of our corps, without a moment of unnecessary delay. More I *cannot* promise you, because I cannot promise more to myself; but from that instant your fortune, if I augur aught aright from your ability, will be in your hands. You shake your head—surely you must see that our

differences are not vehement—it is a difference not of measures, but men. There is but a *verbal* disagreement between us; and we must own the wisdom of the sentence recorded in Aulus Gellius, that '*he is but a madman, who splits the weight of things upon the hair-breadths of words.*' You laugh at the quaintness of the quotation; quaint proverbs are often the truest."

If my reader should think lightly of me, when I own that I felt wavering and irresolute at the end of this speech, let him for a moment place himself in my situation—let him feel indignant at the treachery, the injustice, the ingratitude of one man; and, at the very height of his resentment, let him be soothed, flattered, courted, by the offered friendship and favour of another. Let him personally despise the former, and esteem the latter; and let him, above all, be *convinced*, as well as *persuaded*, of the truth of Vincent's hint, viz., that no sacrifice of principle, nor of measures, was required—nothing but an alliance against *men*, not measures. And who were those men? bound to me by a single tie—meriting from my gratitude a single consideration? No! the men, above all others, who had offered me the greatest affront, and deserved from me the smallest esteem.

But, however human feelings might induce me to waver, I felt that it was not by them only I was to decide. I am not a man whose vices or virtues are regulated by the impulse and passion of the moment: if I am quick to act, I am habitually slow to deliberate. I turned to Vincent, and pressed his hand: "I dare not trust myself to answer you now," said I: "give me till to-morrow; I shall then have both considered and determined."

I did not wait for his reply. I sprang from him, turned down the passage which leads to Pall Mall, and hastened home once more to commune

with my own heart, and—*not* to be still.

In these confessions I have made no scruple of owning my errors and my foibles; all that could occasion mirth or benefit to the reader were his own. I have kept a veil over the darker and stormier emotions of my soul; all that could neither amuse nor instruct him are *mine*!

Hours passed on—it became time to dress—I rang for Bedos—dressed as usual—great emotions interfere little with the mechanical operations of life—and drove to Gulo-seton's.

He was unusually entertaining; the dinner too was unusually good; but, thinking that I was sufficiently intimate with my host not to be obliged to belie my feelings, I remained *dis-trait*, absent, and dull.

"What is the matter with you, my friend?" said the good-natured epicure; "you have neither applauded my jokes, nor tasted my *escalopes*; and your behaviour has trifled alike with my *chevreuil* and my feelings!" —The proverb is right, in saying "Grief is communicative." I confess

that I was eager to unbosom *myself* to one upon whose confidence I could depend. Gulo-seton heard me with great attention and interest—"Little," said he, kindly, "little as I care for these matters myself, I can feel for those who do: I wish I could serve you better than by advice. However, you cannot, I imagine, hesitate to accept Vincent's offer. What matters it whether you sit on one bench or on another, so that you do not sit in a thorough draught—or dine at Lord Lincoln's, or Lord Dawton's, so long as the cooks are equally good? As for Dawton, I always thought him a shuffling, mean fellow, who buys his wines at the second price, and sells his offices at the first. Come, my dear fellow, let us drink to his confusion."

So saying, Gulo-seton filled my glass to the brim. He had sympathised with me—I thought it, therefore, my duty to sympathise with him; nor did we part till the eyes of the *bon vivant* saw more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in the philosophy of the sober.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

— *Si ad honestatem nati sumus, ea aut sola expetenda est, aut certe omni pondere gravior est habenda quam reliqua omnia.*—TULLY.

*Cæs. Brutus, I do observe you now of late:
I have not from your eyes that gentleness,
And show of love as I was wont to have.*—*Julius Cæsar.*

I ROSE at my usual early hour; sleep had tended to calm, and, I hope, also, to better, my feelings. I had now leisure to reflect, that I had not embraced my party from any private or interested motive; it was not, therefore, from a private or interested motive that I was justified in deserting it. Our passions are terrible sophists! When Vincent had told me, the day before, that it was from men, not measures, that I was to change, and that such a change could scarcely deserve the name, my heart adopted the assertion, and fancied it into truth.

I now began to perceive the delusion; were government as mechanically perfect as it has never yet been (but as I trust it may yet be), it would signify little who were the mere machines that regulated its springs: but in a constitution like ours, the chief character of which—pardon me, ye De Lolmeites—is its uncertainty; where men invariably make the measures square to the dimensions of their own talent or desire; and where, reversing the maxim of the tailor, the measures so rarely make the men; it required no penetration to see how dangerous it was to entrust to the aristocratic prejudice of Lincoln, or the vehement imbecility of Lesborough, the execution of the very same measures which might safely be committed to the plain sense of Dawton, and, above all, to the great and

various talents of his coadjutors. But what made the vital difference between the two parties was less in the leaders than the body. In the Dawton faction, the best, the purest, the wisest of the day were enrolled; they took upon themselves the origin of all the active measures, and Lord Dawton was the mere channel through which those measures flowed; the plain, the unpretending, and somewhat feeble character of Lord Dawton's mind, readily conceded to the abler components of his party the authority it was so desirable that they should exert. In Vincent's party, with the exception of himself, there was scarcely an individual with the honesty requisite for loving the projects they affected to purpose, or the talents that were necessary for carrying them into effect, even were their wishes sincere; nor was either the haughty Lincoln, or his noisy and overbearing companion, Lesborough, at all of a temper to suffer that quiet, yet powerful interference of others, to which Dawton unhesitatingly submitted.

I was the more resolved to do all possible justice to Dawton's party, from the inclination I naturally had to lean towards the other; and in all matters, where private pique or self-interest can possibly penetrate, it has ever been the object of my mature consideration to direct my particular attention to that side of the question which such undue partizans are the

least likely to espouse. While I was gradually, but clearly, feeling my way to a decision, I received the following note from Guloseton :—

“I said nothing to you last night of what is now to be the subject of my letter, lest you should suppose it arose rather from the heat of an extempore conviviality, than its real source, viz., a sincere esteem for your mind, a sincere affection for your heart, and a sincere sympathy in your resentment and your interest.

“They tell me that Lord Dawton’s triumph or discomfiture rests entirely upon the success of the motion upon — — —, brought before the House of Commons, on the — — —. I care, you know, very little, for my *own* part, which way this question is decided ; do not think, therefore, that I make any sacrifice when I request you to suffer me to follow your advice in the disposal of my four votes. I imagine, of course, that you would wish them to adopt the contrary side to Lord Dawton ; and upon receiving a line from you to that effect, they shall be empowered to do so.

“Pray, oblige me also by taking the merit of this measure upon yourself, and saying (wherever it may be useful to you,) how entirely both the voters and their influence are at your disposal. I trust we shall yet play the Bel to this Dragon, and fell him from his high places.

“Pity me, my dear friend ; I dine out to-day, and feel already, by an intuitive shudder, that the soup will be cold and the sherry hot. Adieu.

“Ever your’s,

“GULOSETON.”

Now, then, my triumph, my vanity, and my revenge might be fully gratified. I had before me a golden opportunity of displaying my own power, and of humbling that of the minister. My heart swelled high at the thought. Let it be forgiven me,

if, for a single moment, my previous calculations and morality vanished from my mind, and I saw only the offer of Vincent, and the generosity of Guloseton. But I checked the risings of my heart, and compelled my proud spirit to obedience.

I placed Guloseton’s letter before me, and, as I read it once more in order to reply to it, the disinterested kindness and delicacy of one, whom I had long, in the injustice of my thoughts, censured as selfish, came over me so forcibly, and contrasted so deeply with the hollowness of friends more sounding, alike in their profession and their creeds, that the tears rushed to my eyes.

A thousand misfortunes are less affecting than a single kindness.

I wrote, in answer, a warm and earnest letter of thanks for an offer, the kindness of which penetrated me to the soul. I detailed at some length the reasons which induced me to the decision I had taken ; I sketched also the nature of the very important motion about to be brought before the House, and deduced from that sketch the impossibility of conscientiously opposing Lord Dawton’s party in the debate. I concluded with repeating the expressions my gratitude suggested ; and, after declining all interference with Lord Guloseton’s votes, ventured to add, that *had* I interfered, it would have been in support of Dawton ; not as a man, but a minister—not as an individual friend, but a public servant.

I had just despatched this letter when Vincent entered ; I acquainted him, though in the most respectful and friendly terms, with my determination. He seemed greatly disappointed, and endeavoured to shake my resolution ; finding this was in vain, he appeared at last satisfied, and even affected with my reasons. When we parted, it was with a promise, confirmed by both, that no public variance

should ever again alter our private opinion of each other.

When I was once more alone, and saw myself brought back to the very foot of the ladder I had so far and so fortunately climbed; when I saw that, in rejecting all the overtures of my friends, I was left utterly solitary and unaided among my foes—when I looked beyond, and saw no faint loophole of hope, no single stepping stone on which to recommence my broken but unwearied career—perhaps one pang of regret and repentance at my determination came across me; but there is something marvellously restorative in a good conscience, and one soon learns to look with hope to the future, when one can feel justified in turning with pride to the past.

My horse came to the door at my usual hour for riding: with what gladness I sprang upon his back, felt the free wind freshening over my fevered cheek, and turned my rein towards the green lanes that border the great city on its western side. I know few counsellors more exhilarating than a spirited horse. I do not wonder that the Roman emperor made a consul of his steed. On horseback I always best feel my powers, and survey my resources: on horseback I always originate my subtlest schemes, and plan their ablest execution. Give me but a light rein, and a free bound, and I am Cicero—Cato—Caesar; dismount me, and I become a mere clod of the earth which you condemn me to touch: fire, energy, *ethereality*, have departed; I am the soil without the sun—the cask without the wine—the garments without the man.

I returned homewards with increased spirits and collected thoughts: I urged my mind from my own situation, and suffered it to rest upon what Lady Roseville had told me of Reginald Glanville's interference in my behalf. That extraordinary man still

continued powerfully to excite my interest; nor could I dwell, without some yearning of the kindlier affections, upon his unsolicited, and, but for Lady Roseville's communication, unknown exertions in my cause. Although the officers of justice were still actively employed in the pursuit of Tyrrell's murderer, and although the newspapers were still full of speculations on their indifferent success, public curiosity had begun to flag upon the inquiry. I had, once or twice, been in Glanville's company when the murder was brought upon the tapis, and narrowly examined his behaviour upon a subject which touched him so fearfully. I could not, however, note any extraordinary confusion or change in his countenance; perhaps the pale cheek grew somewhat paler, the dreaming eye more abstracted, and the absent spirit more wandering than before; but many other causes than guilt could account for signs so doubtful and minute.

"You shall soon know all," the last words which he had addressed to me, yet rang in my ears; and most intensely did I anticipate the fulfilment of this promise. My hopes too—those flatterers, so often the pleasing antitheses of reason—whispered that this was not the pledge of a guilty man; and yet he had said to Lady Roseville, that he did not wonder at my estrangement from him: such words seemed to require a less favourable construction than those he had addressed to me; and, in making this mental remark, another, of no flattering nature to Glanville's disinterestedness, suggested itself; might not his interference for me with Lord Dawton, arise rather from policy than friendship; might it not occur to him, if as I surmised, he was acquainted with my suspicions, and acknowledged their dreadful justice, that it would be advisable to propitiate my silence? Such were among the thousand

thoughts which flashed across me, and left my speculations in debate and doubt.

Nor did my reflections pass unnoticed the nature of Lady Roseville's affection for Glanville. From the seeming coldness and austerity of Sir Reginald's temperament, it was likely that this was innocent, at least in act; and there was also something guileless in the manner in which she appeared rather to exult in, than to conceal, her attachment. True that she was bound by no ties; she had neither husband nor children, for whose sake love became a crime: free and unfettered, if she gave her heart to Glanville, it was also allowable to render the gift lawful and perpetual by the blessing of the church.

Alas! how little can woman, shut up in her narrow and limited circle of duties, know of the wandering life and various actions of her lover! Little, indeed, could Lady Roseville, when, in the heat of her enthusiasm, she spoke of the lofty and generous character of Glanville, dream of the foul and dastardly crime of which he was more than suspected; nor, while it was, perhaps, her fondest wish to ally herself to his destiny, could her wildest fancies anticipate the felon's fate, which, if death came not in a hastier and kinder shape, must sooner or later await him.

Of Thornton I had neither seen nor heard thought since my departure from Lord Chester's; that reprieve was, however, shortly to expire. I had scarcely got into Oxford-street, in my way homeward, when I perceived him crossing the street with another man. I turned round to scrutinise the features of his companion, and, in spite of a great change of dress, a huge pair of false whiskers, and an artificial appearance of increased age, my habit of observing countenances enabled me to recognise, on the instant, my intellectual and virtuous friend, Mr. Job

Jonson. They disappeared in a shop, nor did I think it worth while further to observe them, though I still bore a reminiscitory spite against Mr. Job Jonson, which I was fully resolved to wreak at the first favourable opportunity.

I passed by Lady Roseville's door. Though the hour was late, and I had, therefore, but a slight chance of finding her at home, yet I thought the chance worth the trouble of inquiry. To my agreeable surprise, I was admitted: no one was in the drawing-room. The servant said, Lady Roseville was at that moment engaged, but would very shortly see me, and begged I would wait.

Agitated as I was by various reflections, I walked (in the restlessness of my mood) to and fro the spacious rooms which formed Lady Roseville's apartments of reception. At the far end was a small *boudoir*, where none but the goddess's favoured few were admitted. As I approached towards it, I heard voices, and the next moment recognised the deep tones of Glanville. I turned hastily away, lest I should overhear the discourse; but I had scarcely got three steps, when the convulsed sound of a woman's sob came upon my ear. Shortly afterwards, steps descended the stairs, and the street-door opened.

The minutes rolled on, and I became impatient. The servant re-entered—Lady Roseville was so suddenly and seriously indisposed, that she was unable to see me. I left the house, and, full of bewildered conjectures, returned to my apartments.

The next day was one of the most important in my life. I was standing wistfully by my fire-place, listening with the most mournful attention to a broken-winded hurdy-gurdy, stationed opposite to my window, when Bedos announced Sir Reginald Glanville. It so happened, that I had that morning taken the miniature I

had found in the fatal field, from the secret place in which I usually kept it, in order closely to examine it, lest any proof of its owner, more convincing than the initials and Thornton's interpretation, might be discovered by a minuter investigation.

The picture was lying on the table when Glanville entered: my first impulse was to seize and secrete it; my second to suffer it to remain, and to watch the effect the sight of it might produce. In following the latter, I thought it, however, as well to choose my own time for discovering the miniature; and, as I moved to the table, I threw my handkerchief carelessly over it. Glanville came up to me at once, and his countenance, usually close and reserved in its expression, assumed a franker and bolder aspect.

"You have lately changed towards me," he said—"mindful of our former friendship, I have come to demand the reason."

"Can Sir Reginald Glanville's memory," answered I, "supply him with no probable cause?"

"It can," replied Glanville, "but I would not trust *only* to that. Sit down, Pelham, and listen to me. I can read your thoughts, and I might affect to despise their import—perhaps two years since I should—at present I can pity and excuse them. I have come to you now, in the love and confidence of our early days, to claim as then your good opinion and esteem. If you require any explanation at my hands, it shall be given. My days are approaching their end. I have made up my accounts with others—I would do so with you. I confess that I would fain leave behind me in your breast, the same affectionate remembrance I might heretofore have claimed, and which, whatever be your suspicions, I have done nothing to forfeit. I have, moreover, a dearer interest than my own to con-

sult in this wish—you colour, Pelham—you know to whom I allude; for my sister's sake, if not for my own, you will hear me."

Glanville paused for a moment. I raised the handkerchief from the miniature—I pushed the latter towards him—"Do you remember this?" said I, in a low tone.

With a wild cry, which thrilled through my heart, Glanville sprang forward and seized it. He gazed eagerly and intensely upon it, and his cheek flushed—his eyes sparkled—his breast heaved. The next moment he fell back in his chair, in one of the half swoons, to which, upon a sudden and violent emotion, the debilitating effects of his disease subjected him.

Before I could come to his assistance, he had recovered. He looked wildly and fiercely upon me. "Speak," he cried, "speak—where got you this—where?—answer, for mercy's sake?"

"Recollect yourself," said I sternly. "I found that token of your presence upon the spot where Tyrrell was murdered."

"True, true," said Glanville, slowly, and in an absent and abstracted tone. He ceased abruptly, and covered his face with his hands; from this attitude he started with some sudden impulse.

"And tell me," he said, in a low, inward, exulting tone, "was it—was it red with the blood of the murdered man?"

"Wretch!" I exclaimed, "do you glory in your guilt?"

"Hold!" said Glanville, rising, with an altered and haughty air; "it is not to your accusations that I am now to listen: if you are yet desirous of weighing their justice before you decide upon them, you will have the opportunity; I shall be at home at ten this night; come to me, and *you shall know all*. At present, the sight

of this picture has unnerved me. Shall I see you?"

I made no other rejoinder than the brief expression of my assent, and Glanville instantly left the room.

During the whole of that day, my mind was wrought up into a state of feverish and preternatural excitement. I could not remain in the same spot for an instant: my pulse beat with the irregularity of delirium. For the last hour I placed my watch before me, and kept my eyes constantly fixed upon it. It was not *only* Glanville's confession that I was to hear; my own fate, my future connection with Ellen, rested upon the story of that night. For myself, when I called to mind Glanville's acknowledgment

of the picture, and his slow and involuntary remembrance of the spot where it was found, I scarcely allowed my temper, sanguine as it was, to hope.

Some minutes before the hour of ten I repaired to Glanville's house. He was alone—the picture was before him.

I drew my chair towards him in silence, and, accidentally lifting up my eyes, encountered the opposite mirror. I started at my own face; the intensity and fearfulness of my interest had rendered it even more hueless than that of my companion.

There was a pause for some moments, at the end of which Glanville thus began.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

I do but hide

Under these words, like embers, every spark
Of that which has consumed me. Quick and dark
The grave is yawning;—as its roof shall cover
My limbs with dust and worms, under and over,
So let oblivion hide this grief.—*Julian and Maddalo.*

* * * * *

With thee the very future fled,
I stand amid the past alone,
A tomb which still shall guard the dead,
Though every earthlier trace be flown;
A tomb o'er which the weeds that love
Decay—their wild luxuriance wreath!
The cold and calous stone above—
And only thou and Death beneath.

From Unpublished Poems by ———

THE HISTORY OF SIR REGINALD
GLANVILLE.

"You remember my character at school—the difficulty with which you drew me from the visionary and abstracted loneliness which, even at that time, was more consonant to my taste, than all the sports and society resorted to by other boys—and the deep, and, to you, inexplicable delight with which I returned to my reveries and solitude again. That character has continued through life the same; circumstances have strengthened, not altered it. So has it been with *you*; the temper, the habits, the tastes, so strongly contrasted with mine in boyhood, have lost nothing of that contrast. Your ardour for the various ambition of life is still the antipodes to my indifference: your daring, restless, thoughtful resolution in the pursuit, still shames my indolence and abstraction. You are still the votary of the world, but will become its conqueror—I its fugitive—and shall die its victim.

"After we parted at school, I went

for a short time to a tutor's in —shire. Of this place I soon grew weary; and, my father's death rendering me in a great measure my own master, I lost no time in leaving it. I was seized with that mania for travel common enough to all persons of my youth and disposition. My mother allowed me an almost unlimited command over the fortune eventually to be my own; and, yielding to my wishes, rather than her fears, she suffered me, at the age of eighteen, to set out for the Continent alone. Perhaps the quiet and reserve of my character made her think me less exposed to the dangers of youth, than if I had been of a more active and versatile temper. This is no uncommon mistake; a serious and contemplative disposition is, however, often the worst formed to acquire readily the knowledge of the world, and always the most calculated to suffer deeply from the experience.

"I took up my residence for some time at Spa. It is, you know, perhaps, a place dull enough to make gambling the only amusement; every one played

—and I did not escape the contagion; nor did I wish it: for, like the minister Godolphin, my habitual silence made me love gaming for its own sake, because it was a substitute for conversation. This pursuit brought me acquainted with Mr. Tyrrell, who was then staying at Spa; he had not, at that time, quite dissipated his fortune, but was daily advancing towards so desirable a consummation. A gambler's acquaintance is readily made, and easily kept,—provided you gamble too.

“We became as intimate as the reserve of my habits ever suffered me to become with any one but you. He was many years older than I—had seen a great deal of the world—had mixed much in its best societies, and at that time, whatever was the vulgarity of his mind, had little of the coarseness of *manner* which very soon afterwards distinguished him; evil communication works rapidly in its results. Our acquaintance was, therefore, natural enough, especially when it is considered that my purse was entirely at his disposal—for borrowing is ‘twice blessed,’ in him that takes and him that gives—the receiver becomes complaisant and flattering, and the lender thinks favourably of one he has obliged.

“We parted at Spa, under a mutual promise to write. I forget if this promise was kept—probably not; we were not, however, the worse friends for being bad correspondents. I continued my travels for about another year: I then returned to England, the same melancholy and dreaming enthusiast as before. It is true that we are the creatures of circumstances; but circumstances are also, in a great measure, the creatures of *us*. I mean, they receive their influences from the previous bent of our own minds; what raises one would depress another, and what vitiates my neighbour might correct me. Thus the experience of

the world makes some persons more worldly—others more abstracted; and the indulgence of the senses becomes a violence to one mind, and a second nature to another. As for me, I had tasted all the pleasures youth and opulence can purchase, and was more averse to them than ever. I had mixed with many varieties of men—I was still more rivetted to the *monotony of self*.

“I cannot hope, while I mention these peculiarities, that I am a very uncommon character: I believe the present age has produced many such. Some time hence, it will be a curious inquiry to ascertain the causes of that acute and sensitive morbidity of mind, which has been, and still is, so epidemic a disease. You know me well enough to believe, that I am not fond of the cant of assuming an artificial character, or of creating a fictitious interest; and I am far from wishing to impose upon you a malady of constitution for a dignity of mind. You must pardon my prolixity. I own that it is very painful to me to come to the main part of my confessions, and I am endeavouring to prepare myself by lingering over the prelude.”

Glanville paused here for a few moments. In spite of the sententious coolness with which he pretended to speak, I saw that he was powerfully and painfully affected.

“Well,” he continued, “to resume the thread of my narrative; after I had stayed some weeks with my mother and sister, I took advantage of their departure for the continent, and resolved to make a tour through England. Rich people, and I have always been very rich, grow exceedingly tired of the embarrassment of their riches. I seized with delight at the idea of travelling without carriages and servants: I took merely a favourite horse, and the black dog, poor Terror, which you see now at my feet

"The day I commenced this plan was to me the epoch of a new and terrible existence. However, you must pardon me if I am not here sufficiently diffuse. Suffice it, that I became acquainted with a being whom, for the first and only time in my life, I loved! This miniature attempts to express her likeness; the initials at the back, interwoven with my own, are hers."

"Yes," said I, incautiously, "they are the initials of Gertrude Douglas."

"What!" cried Glanville, in a loud tone, which he instantly checked, and continued in an indrawn, muttered whisper: "How long is it since I heard that name! and now—now—" he broke off abruptly, and then said, with a calmer voice, "I know not how you have learnt *her* name; perhaps you will explain?"

"From Thornton," said I.

"And has he told you more?" cried Glanville, as if gasping for breath—"the history—the dreadful—"

"Not a word," said I, hastily; "he was with me when I found the picture, and he explained the initials!"

"It is well!" answered Glanville, recovering himself, "you will see presently if I have reason to love that those foul and sordid lips should profane the story I am about to relate. Gertrude was an only daughter; though of gentle blood, she was no match for me, either in rank or fortune. Did I say just now that the world had not altered me? See my folly; one year before I saw her, and I should not have thought *her*, but *myself*, honoured by a marriage;—twelve little months had sufficed to—God forgive me! I took advantage of her love—her youth—her innocence—she fled with me—but *not to the altar!*"

Again Glanville paused, and again, by a violent effort, conquered his emotion, and proceeded:—

"Never let vice be done by halves—never let a man invest all his purer affections in the woman he ruins—never let him cherish the kindness, if he gratifies the selfishness, of his heart. A profligate who really loves his victim, is one of the most wretched of beings. In spite of my successful and triumphant passion—in spite of the first intoxication of possession, and the better and deeper delight of a reciprocity of thought—feeling, sympathy, for the first time, found;—in the midst of all the luxuries my wealth could produce, and of the voluptuous and spring-like hues with which youth, health, and first love, clothe the earth which the loved one treads, and the air which she inhales; in spite of these, in spite of all, I was anything but happy. If Gertrude's cheek seemed a shade more pale, or her eyes less bright, I remembered the sacrifice she had made me, and believed that *she* felt it too. It was in vain, that, with the tender and generous devotion—never found but in woman—she assured me that my love was a recompense for all; the more touching was her tenderness, the more poignant was my remorse. I never loved but her; I have never, therefore, entered into the common-place of passion, and I cannot, even to this day, look upon her sex as ours do in general. I thought, I think so still, that ingratitude to a woman is often a more odious offence—I am sure it contains a more painful penalty—than ingratitude to a man. But enough of this; if you know me, you can penetrate the nature of my feelings—if not, it is in vain to expect your sympathy."

"I never loved living long in one place. We travelled over the greater part of England and France. What must be the enchantment of love when accompanied with innocence and joy, since, even in sin, in remorse, in grief, it brings us a rapture to

which all other things are tame ! Oh ! those were moments steeped in the very elixir of life ; overflowing with the hoarded fondness and sympathies of hearts too full for words, and yet too agitated for silence, when we journeyed alone, and at night, and, as the shadows and stillness of the waning hours gathered round us, drew closer to each other, and concentrated this breathing world in the deep and embracing sentiment of our mutual love ! It was then that I laid my burning temples on her bosom, and felt, while my hand clasped hers, that my visions were realised, and my wandering spirit had sunk unto its rest.

“ I remember well that, one night, we were travelling through one of the most beautiful parts of England ; it was in the very height and flush of summer, and the moon (what scene of love—whether in reality or romance—has any thing of tenderness, or passion, or divinity, where her light is not !) filled the intense skies of June with her presence, and cast a sadder and paler beauty over Gertrude’s cheek. She was always of a melancholy and despondent temper ; perhaps, for that reason, she was more congenial to my own ; and when I gazed upon her that night, I was not surprised to see her eyes filled with tears. ‘ You will laugh at me,’ she said, as I kissed them off and inquired into the cause ; ‘ but I feel a presentiment that I cannot shake off ; it tells me that you will travel this road again before many months are past, and that I shall not be with you, perhaps not upon the earth.’ She was right in all her forebodings, but the suggestion of her death ;—*that* came later.

“ We took up our residence for some time at a beautiful situation, a short distance from a small watering-place. At this watering-place, to my great surprise, I met with Tyrrell. He had come there partly to see a

relation from whom he had some expectations, and partly to recruit his health, which was much broken by his irregularities and excesses. I could not refuse to renew my old acquaintance with him ; and indeed, I thought him too much of a man of the world, and of society, to feel with him that particular delicacy, in regard to Gertrude, which made me in general shun all intercourse with my former friends. He was in great pecuniary embarrassment—much more deeply so than I then imagined ; for I believed the embarrassment to be only temporary. However, my purse was then, as before, at his disposal, and he did not scruple to avail himself very largely of my offers. He came frequently to our house ; and poor Gertrude, who thought I had, for her sake, made a real sacrifice in renouncing my acquaintance, endeavoured to conquer her usual diffidence, and that more painful feeling than diffidence, natural to her station, and even to affect a pleasure in the society of *my* friend, which she was very far from feeling.

“ I was detained at ——— for several weeks by Gertrude’s confinement. The child—happy being !—died a week after its birth. Gertrude was still in bed, and unable to leave it, when I received a letter from Ellen, to say that my mother was then staying at Toulouse, and dangerously ill if I wished once more to see her, Ellen besought me to lose no time in setting off for the continent. You may imagine my situation, or rather you cannot, for you cannot conceive the smallest particle of that intense love I bore to Gertrude. To you—to any other man, it might seem no extraordinary hardship to leave her even for an uncertain period—to me it was like tearing away the very life from my heart.

“ I procured her a sort of half companion, and half nurse ; I provided for

her every thing that the most anxious and fearful love could suggest : and, with a mind full of forebodings too darkly to be realised hereafter, I hastened to the nearest seaport, and set sail for France.

“ When I arrived at Toulouse my mother was much better, but still in a very uncertain and dangerous state of health. I stayed with her for more than a month, during which time every post brought me a line from Gertrude, and bore back a message from ‘ my heart to hers ’ in return. This was no mean consolation, more especially when each letter spoke of increasing health and strength. At the month’s end, I was preparing to return—my mother was slowly recovering, and I no longer had any fears on her account ; but, there are links in our destiny fearfully interwoven with each other, and ending only in the anguish of our ultimate doom. The day before that fixed for my departure, I had been into a house where an epidemic disease raged : that night I complained of oppressive and deadly illness—before morning I was in a high fever.

“ During the time I was sensible of my state, I wrote constantly to Gertrude, and carefully concealed my illness ; but for several days I was delirious. When I recovered, I called eagerly for my letters—*there were none ;—none !* I could not believe I was yet awake ; but days still passed on, and not a line from England—from Gertrude. The instant I was able, I insisted upon putting horses to my carriage ; I could bear no longer the torture of my suspense. By the most rapid journeys my debility would allow me to bear, I arrived in England. I travelled down to — by the same road that I had gone over with her ! the words of her foreboding, at that time, sank like ice into my heart, ‘ You will travel this road again before many months are

past, and I shall not be with you ; perhaps, I shall not be upon the earth ! ’ At that thought I could have called unto the grave to open for me. Her unaccountable and lengthened silence, in spite of all the urgency and entreaties of my letters for a reply, filled me with presentiments the most fearful. Oh, God—oh, God, they were nothing to the truth !

“ At last I arrived at — : my carriage stopped at the very house—my whole frame was perfectly frozen with dread—I trembled from limb to limb—the ice of a thousand winters seemed curdling through my blood. The bell rang—once, twice—no answer—I would have leaped out of the carriage—I would have forced an entrance, but I was unable to move. A man fettered and spell-bound by an incubus, is less helpless than I was. At last, an old female I had never seen before, appeared.

“ ‘ Where is she ? How ! — ’ I could utter no more—my eyes were fixed upon the inquisitive and frightened countenance opposite to my own. Those eyes, I thought, might have said all that my lips could not ; I was deceived—the old woman understood me no more than I did her : another person appeared—I recognised the face—it was that of a girl, who had been one of our attendants. Will you believe, that at that sight, the sight of one I had seen before, and could associate with the remembrance of the breathing, the living, the present Gertrude, a thrill of joy flashed across me—my fears seemed to vanish—my spell to cease ?

“ I sprang from the carriage : I caught the girl by the robe. ‘ Your mistress,’ said I, ‘ your mistress—she is well—she is alive—speak, speak ! ’ The girl shrieked out ; my eagerness, and, perhaps, my emaciated and altered appearance, terrified her ; but she had the strong nerves of youth, and was soon re-assured. She requested

me to step in, and she would tell me all. My wife (Gertrude always went by that name) *was* alive, and, she believed, well, but she had left that place some weeks since. Trembling, and still fearful, but in heaven, comparatively to my former agony, I followed the girl and the old woman into the house.

"The former got me some water. 'Now,' said I, when I had drunk a long and hearty draught, 'I am ready to hear *all*—my wife has left this house, you say—for what place?' The girl hesitated and looked down; the old woman, who was somewhat deaf, and did not rightly understand my questions, or the nature of the personal interest I had in the reply, answered,—'What does the gentleman want? the poor young lady who was last here? Lord help her!'

"'What of her?' I called out in a new alarm. 'What of her? Where has she gone? Who took her away?'

"'Who took her!' mumbled the old woman, fretful at my impatient tone; 'who took her? *why, the mad doctor to be sure!*'

"I heard no more; my frame could support no longer the agonies my mind had undergone; I fell lifeless on the ground.

"When I recovered, it was at the dead of the night. I was in bed, the old woman and the girl were at my side. I rose slowly and calmly. You know, all men who have ever suffered much, know the strange anomalies of despair—the quiet of our veriest anguish. Deceived by my bearing, I learned by degrees from my attendants, that Gertrude had some weeks since betrayed certain symptoms of insanity; that these, in a very few hours, arose to an alarming pitch. From some reason the woman could not explain, she had, a short time before, discarded the companion I had left with her; she was, therefore, alone among servants. They sent for the

ignorant practitioners of the place they tried their nostrums without success; her madness increased; her attendants, with that superstitious horror of insanity common to the lower classes, became more and more violently alarmed; the landlady insisted on her removal; and—and—I told you, Pelham—I told you—they sent her away—sent her to a mad-house! All this I listened to!—all!—ay, and patiently. I noted down the address of her present abode; it was about the distance of twenty miles from ——. I ordered fresh horses and set off immediately.

"I arrived there at day-break. It was a large, old house, which, like a French hotel, seemed to have no visible door: dark and gloomy, the pile appeared worthy of the purpose to which it was devoted. It was a long time before we aroused any one to answer our call; at length I was ushered into a small parlour—how minutely I remember every article in the room!—what varieties there are in the extreme passions! sometimes the same feeling will deaden all the senses—sometimes render them a hundredfold more acute!

"At last, a man of a smiling and rosy aspect appeared. He pointed to a chair—rubbed his hands—and begged me to unfold my business; few words sufficed to do that. I requested to see his patient; I demanded by what authority she had been put under his care. The man's face altered. He was but little pleased with the nature of my visit. 'The lady,' he said, coolly, 'had been entrusted to his care, with an adequate remuneration, by Mr. Tyrrell; without that gentleman's permission, he could not think even of suffering me to see her.' I controlled my passion; I knew something, if not of the nature of private madhouses, at least of that of mankind. I claimed his patient as my wife. I expressed myself

obliged by his care, and begged his acceptance of a further remuneration, which I tendered, and which was eagerly accepted. The way was now cleared—there is no hell to which a golden branch will not win your admittance.

"The man detained me no longer; he hastened to lead the way. We passed through various long passages: sometimes the low moan of pain and weakness came upon my ear—sometimes the confused murmur of the idiot's drivelling soliloquy. From one passage, at right angles with the one through which we proceeded, broke a fierce and thrilling shriek; it sank at once into silence—*perhaps beneath the lash!*

"We were now in a different department of the building—all was silence—hushed—deep—breathless: this seemed to me more awful than the terrible sounds I had just heard. My guide went slowly on, sometimes breaking the stillness of the dim gallery by the jingle of his keys—sometimes by a muttered panegyric on himself and his humanity. I neither needed nor answered him.

"We read in the annals of the Inquisition, of every limb, nerve, sinew of the victim, being so nicely and accurately strained to their utmost, that the frame would not bear the additional screwing of a single hair-breadth. Such seemed *my* state. We came to a small door, at the right hand; it was the last but one in the passage. We paused before it. 'Stop,' said I, 'for one moment;' and I was so faint and sick at heart, that I leaned against the wall to recover myself, before I let him open the door: when he did, it was a greater relief than I can express, to see that all was utterly dark. 'Wait, Sir,' said the guide, as he entered; and a sullen noise told me that he was unbarring the heavy shutter.

"Slowly the grey cold light of the

morning broke in: a dark figure was stretched upon a wretched bed, at the far end of the room. She raised herself at the sound. She turned her face towards me; I did not fall, nor faint, nor shriek; I stood motionless, as if fixed into stone: and yet it was Gertrude upon whom I gazed. Oh, Heaven! who but myself could have recognised her? Her cheek was as the cheek of the dead—the hueless skin clung to the bone—the eye was dull and glassy for one moment: the next it became terribly and preternaturally bright—but not with the ray of intellect, or consciousness, or recognition. She looked long and hard at me; a voice, hollow and broken, but which still penetrated my heart, came forth through the wan lips, that scarcely moved with the exertion. 'I am very cold,' it said—'but if I complain, you will beat me.' She fell down again upon the bed, and hid her face.

"My guide, who was leaning carelessly by the window, turned to me with a sort of smirk—'This is her way, sir,' he said; 'her madness is of a very singular description: we have not, as yet, been able to discover how far it extends; sometimes she seems conscious of the past, sometimes utterly oblivious of everything: for days she is perfectly silent, or, at least, says nothing more than you have just heard; but, at times, she raves so violently, that—that—*but I never use force where it can be helped.*'

"I looked at the man, but I could not answer, unless I had torn him to pieces on the spot. I turned away hastily from the room: but I did not quit the house without Gertrude—I placed her in the carriage, by my side—notwithstanding all the protestations and fears of the keeper; these were readily silenced by the sum I gave him; it was large enough to have liberated half his household. In fact, I gathered from his conversation

that Tyrrell had spoken of Gertrude as an unhappy female whom he himself had seduced, and would now be rid of. I thank you, Pelham, for that frown, but keep your indignation till a fitter season for it.

"I took *my* victim, for I then regarded her as such, to a secluded and lonely spot: I procured for her whatever advice England could afford; all was in vain. Night and day I was by her side, but she never, for a moment, seemed to recollect me: yet were there times of fierce and overpowering delirium, when my name was uttered in the transport of the most passionate enthusiasm—when my features as absent, though not present, were recalled and dwelt upon with all the minuteness of the most faithful detail; and I knelt by her in all those moments, when no other human being was near, and clasped her wan hand, and wiped the dew from her forehead, and gazed upon her convulsed and changing face, and called upon her in a voice which could once have allayed her wildest emotions; and had the agony of seeing her eye dwell upon me with the most estranged indifference, or the most vehement and fearful aversion. But, ever and anon, she uttered words which chilled the very marrow of my bones; words which I would not, dared not believe, had any meaning or method in their madness—but which entered into my own brain, and preyed there like the devouring of a fire. There *was* a truth in those ravings—a reason in that incoherence—and my cup was not yet full.

"At last, one physician, who appeared to me to have more knowledge than the rest, of the mysterious workings of her dreadful disease, advised me to take her to the scenes of her first childhood: 'Those scenes,' said he, justly, 'are in all stages of life the most fondly remembered; and I have noted, that in many cases of insanity,

places are easier recalled than persons; perhaps, if we can once awaken one link in the chain, it will communicate to the rest.'

"I took this advice, and set off to Norfolk. Her early home was not many miles distant from the churchyard where you once met me, and in that churchyard her mother was buried. *She* had died before Gertrude's flight; the father's death had followed it: perhaps my sufferings were a just retribution! The house had gone into other hands, and I had no difficulty in engaging it. Thank Heaven, I was spared the pain of seeing any of Gertrude's relations.

"It was night when we moved to the house. I had placed within the room where she used to sleep, all the furniture and books, with which it appeared, from my inquiries, to have been formerly filled. We laid her in the bed that had held that faded and altered form, in its freshest and purest years. I shrouded myself in one corner of the room, and counted the dull minutes till the day-light dawned. I pass over the detail of my recital—the experiment partially succeeded—would to God that it had not! would that she had gone down to her grave with her dreadful secret unrevealed! would—but—"

Here Glanville's voice failed him, and there was a brief silence before he recommenced.

"Gertrude now had many lucid intervals; but these my presence were always sufficient to change into a delirious raving, even more incoherent than her insanity had ever yet been. She would fly from me with the most fearful cries, bury her face in her hands, and seem like one oppressed and haunted by a supernatural visitation, as long as I remained in the room; the moment I left her, she began, though slowly, to recover.

"This was to me the bitterest

affliction of all—to be forbidden to nurse, to cherish, to tend her, was like taking from me my last hope! But little can the thoughtless or the worldly dream of the depths of a real love; I used to wait all day by her door, and it was luxury enough to me to catch her accents, or hear her move, or sigh, or even weep; and all night, when she could not know of my presence, I used to lie down by her bedside; and when I sank into a short and convulsed sleep, I saw her once more, in my brief and fleeting dreams, in all the devoted love, and glowing beauty, which had once constituted the whole of my happiness, and *my world*.

“One day I had been called from my post by her door. They came to me hastily—she was in strong convulsions. I flew up stairs, and supported her in my arms till the fits had ceased: we then placed her in bed; she never rose from it again: but on that bed of death, the words, as well as the cause of her former insanity, were explained—the mystery was unravelled.

“It was a still and breathless night. The moon, which was at its decrease, came through the half-closed shutters, and, beneath its solemn and eternal light, she yielded to my entreaties, and revealed all. The man—my

friend—Tyrrell—had polluted her ear with his addresses, and when forbidden the house, had bribed the woman I had left with her, to convey his letters;—she was discharged—but Tyrrell was no ordinary villain; he entered the house one evening, when no one but Gertrude was there.—Come near me, Pelham—nearer—bend down your ear—he used force, violence! That night Gertrude’s senses deserted her—you know the rest.

“The moment that I gathered, from Gertrude’s broken sentences, their meaning, that moment the demon entered into my soul. All human feelings seemed to fly from my heart; it shrank into one burning, and thirsty, and fiery want—and that want was for revenge! I would have sprung from the bedside, but Gertrude’s hand clung to me, and detained me; the damp, chill grasp, grew colder and colder—it ceased—the hand fell—I turned—one slight, but awful shudder, went over that face, made yet more wan by the light of the waning and ghastly moon—one convulsion shook the limbs—one murmur passed the falling and hueless lips. I cannot tell you the rest—you know—you can guess it.

“That day week we buried her in the lonely churchyard—where she had, in her lucid moments, wished to lie—by the side of her mother.”

CHAPTER LXXV.

— I breathed,
But not the breath of human life ;
A serpent round my heart was wreathed,
And stung my very thought to strife — *The Giaour.*

“**THANK** Heaven, the most painful part of my story is at an end. You will now be able to account for our meeting in the churchyard at ———. I secured myself a lodging at a cottage not far from the spot which held Gertrude's remains. Night after night I wandered to that lonely place, and longed for a couch beside the sleeper, whom I mourned in the selfishness of my soul. I prostrated myself on the mound : I humbled myself to tears. In the overflowing anguish of my heart I forgot all that had aroused its stormier passions into life. Revenge, hatred,—all vanished. I lifted up my face to the tender heavens : I called aloud to the silent and placid air ; and when I turned again to that unconscious mound, I thought of nothing but the sweetness of our early love, and the bitterness of her early death. It was in such moments that your footstep broke upon my grief : the instant others had seen me—other eyes penetrated the sanctity of my regret—from that instant, whatever was more soft and holy in the passions and darkness of my mind seemed to vanish away like a scroll. I again returned to the intense and withering remembrance which was henceforward to make the very key and pivot of my existence. I again recalled the last night of Gertrude's life ; I again shuddered at the low, murmured sounds, whose dreadful sense broke slowly upon my soul. I again felt the cold—cold, slimy grasp of those wan and dying fingers ;

and I again nerved my heart to an iron strength, and vowed deep, deep-rooted, endless, implacable revenge.

“The morning after the night you saw me, I left my abode. I went to London, and attempted to methodise my plans of vengeance. The first thing to discover, was Tyrrell's present residence. By accident, I heard he was at Paris, and, within two hours of receiving the intelligence, I set off for that city. On arriving there, the habits of the gambler soon discovered him to my search. I saw him one night at a hell. He was evidently in distressed circumstances, and the fortune of the table was against him. Unperceived by him, I feasted my eyes on his changing countenance, as those deadly and wearing transitions of feeling, only to be produced by the gaming-table, passed over it. While I gazed upon him, a thought of more exquisite and refined revenge, than had yet occurred to me, flashed upon my mind. Occupied with the ideas it gave rise to, I went into the adjoining room, which was quite empty. There I seated myself, and endeavoured to develop, more fully, the rude and imperfect outline of my scheme.

“The arch tempter favoured me with a trusty coadjutor in my designs. I was lost in a reverie, when I heard myself accosted by name. I looked up, and beheld a man whom I had often seen with Tyrrell, both at Spa, and ——— (the watering-place where,

with Gertrude, I had met Tyrrell). He was a person of low birth and character; but esteemed, from his love of coarse humour, and vulgar enterprise, a man of infinite parts—a sort of Yorick—by the set most congenial to Tyrrell's tastes. By this undue reputation, and the *levelling* habit of gaming, to which he was addicted, he was raised, in certain societies, much above his proper rank: need I say that this man was Thornton? I was but slightly acquainted with him; however, he accosted me cordially, and endeavoured to draw me into conversation.

“‘Have you seen Tyrrell?’ said he; ‘he is at it again; what’s bred in the bone, you know, &c.’ I turned pale with the mention of Tyrrell’s name, and replied very laconically, to what purpose, I forget.—‘Ah! ah!’ rejoined Thornton, eyeing me with an air of impertinent familiarity—‘I see you have not forgiven him; he played you but a shabby trick at —; seduced your mistress, or something of that sort; he told me all about it: pray, how is the poor girl now?’

“I made no reply; I sank down and gasped for breath. All I had suffered seemed nothing to the indignity I then endured. *She—she—who had once been my pride—my honour—life—to be thus spoken of—and—* I could not pursue the idea. I rose hastily, looked at Thornton with a glance, which might have abashed a man less shameless and callous than himself, and left the room.

“That night, as I tossed restless and feverish on my bed of thorns, I saw how useful Thornton might be to me in the prosecution of the scheme I had entered into; and the next morning I sought him out, and purchased (no very difficult matter) both his secrecy and his assistance. My plan of vengeance, to one who had seen and observed less of the varieties of human

nature than you have done, might seem far-fetched and unnatural; for while the superficial are ready to allow eccentricity as natural in the coolness of ordinary life, they never suppose it can exist in the heat of the passions—as if, in such moments, any thing was ever considered absurd in the means which was favourable to the end. Were the secrets of one passionate and irregular heart laid bare, there would be more romance in them, than in all the fables which we turn from with incredulity and disdain, as exaggerated and overdrawn.

“Among the thousand schemes for retribution which had chased each other across my mind, the death of my victim was only the ulterior object. Death, indeed—the pang of one moment—appeared to me but very feeble justice for the life of lingering and restless anguish to which his treachery had condemned *me*; but *my* penance, *my* doom, I could have forgiven: it was the fate of a more innocent and injured being which irritated the sting and fed the venom of my revenge. That revenge no ordinary punishment could appease. If fanaticism can only be satisfied by the rack and the flames, you may readily conceive a like unappeaseable fury, in a hatred so deadly, so concentrated, and so just as mine—and if fanaticism persuades itself into a virtue, so also did my hatred.

“The scheme which I resolved upon was, to attach Tyrrell more and more to the gaming-table, to be present at his infatuation, to feast my eyes upon the feverish intensity of his suspense—to reduce him, step by step, to the lowest abyss of poverty—to glut my soul with the abjectness and humiliation of his penury—to strip him of all aid, consolation, sympathy, and friendship—to follow him, unseen, to his wretched and squalid home—to mark the struggles of the craving nature with the loathing pride—and,

finally, to watch the frame wear, the eye sink, the lip grow livid, and all the terrible and torturing progress of gnawing want, to utter starvation. Then, in that last state, but not before, I might reveal myself—stand by the hopeless and succourless bed of death—shriek out in the dizzy ear a name, which could treble the horrors of remembrance—snatch from the struggling and agonising conscience the last plank, the last straw, to which, in its madness, it could cling, and blacken the shadows of departing life, by opening to the shuddering sense the threshold of an impatient and yawning hell.

“Hurried away by the unhallowed fever of these projects, I thought of nothing but their accomplishment. I employed Thornton, who still maintained his intimacy with Tyrrell, to decoy him more and more to the gambling-house; and, as the unequal chances of the public table were not rapid enough in their termination to consummate the ruin even of an impetuous and vehement gamester, like Tyrrell, so soon as my impatience desired, Thornton took every opportunity of engaging him in private play, and accelerating my object by the unlawful arts of which he was master. My enemy was every day approaching the farthest verge of ruin; near relations he had none, all his distant ones he had disobliged; all his friends, and even his acquaintance, he had fatigued by his importunity, or disgusted by his conduct. In the whole world there seemed not a being who would stretch forth a helping hand to save him from the total and penniless beggary to which he was hopelessly advancing. Out of the wrecks of his former property, and the generosity of former friends, whatever he had already wrung, had been immediately staked at the gaming-house and as immediately lost

“Perhaps this would not so soon

have been the case, if Thornton had not artfully fed and sustained his expectations. He had been long employed by Tyrrell in a professional capacity, and he knew well all the gamester's domestic affairs; and when he promised, should things come to the worst, to find some expedient to restore them, Tyrrell easily adopted so flattering a belief.

“Meanwhile, I had taken the name and disguise under favour of which you met me at Paris, and Thornton had introduced me to Tyrrell as a young Englishman of great wealth, and still greater inexperience. The gambler grasped eagerly at an acquaintance, which Thornton readily persuaded him he could turn to such account; and I had thus every facility of marking, day by day, how my plot thickened, and my vengeance hastened to its triumph.

“This was not all. I said, there was not in the wide world a being who would have saved Tyrrell from the fate he deserved and was approaching. I forgot there *was* one who still clung to him with affection, and for whom he still seemed to harbour the better and purer feelings of less degraded and guilty times. This person (you will guess readily it was a woman) I made it my especial business and care to wean away from my prey; I would not suffer him a consolation he had denied to me. I used all the arts of seduction to obtain the transfer of her affections. Whatever promises and vows—whether of love or wealth—could effect, were tried; nor, at last, without success—I triumphed. The woman became my slave. It was she who, whenever Tyrrell faltered in his course to destruction, combated his scruples, and urged on his reluctance; it was she who informed me minutely of his pitiful finances, and assisted, to her utmost, in expediting their decay. The still more bitter treachery of

deserting him in his veriest want I reserved till the fittest occasion, and contemplated with a savage delight.

"I was embarrassed in my scheme by two circumstances: first, Thornton's acquaintance with you; and, secondly, Tyrrell's receipt (some time afterwards) of a very unexpected sum of two hundred pounds, in return for renouncing all further and *possible* claim on the purchasers of his estate. To the former, so far as it might interfere with my plans, or lead to my detection, you must pardon me for having put a speedy termination; the latter threw me into great consternation—for Tyrrell's first idea was to renounce the gaming table, and endeavour to live upon the trifling pittance he had acquired, as long as the utmost economy would permit.

"This idea, Margaret, the woman I spoke of, according to my instructions, so artfully and successfully combated, that Tyrrell yielded to his natural inclination, and returned once more to the infatuation of his favourite pursuit. However, I had become restlessly impatient for the conclusion to this prefatory part of my revenge, and, accordingly, Thornton and myself arranged that Tyrrell should be persuaded by the former to risk all, even to his very last farthing, in a private game with me. Tyrrell, who believed he should readily recruit himself by my unskilfulness in the game, fell easily into the snare; and on the second night of our engagement, he not only had lost the whole of his remaining pittance, but had signed bonds owing to a debt of far greater amount than he, at that time, could ever even have dreamt of possessing.

"Flushed, heated, almost maddened with my triumph, I yielded to the exultation of the moment. I did not know you were so near—I discovered

myself—you remember the scene. went joyfully home: and for the first time since Gertrude's death, I was happy; but there I imagined my vengeance only would begin; I revelled in the burning hope of marking the hunger and extremity that must ensue. The next day, when Tyrrell turned round, in his despair, for one momentary word of comfort from the lips to which he believed, in the fond credulity of his heart, falsehood and treachery never came, his last earthly friend taunted and deserted him. Mark me, Pelham—I was by, and heard her!

"But here my power of retribution was to close: from the thirst still unslaked and unappeased, the cup was abruptly snatched. Tyrrell disappeared—no one knew whither. I set Thornton's inquiries at work. A week afterwards he brought me word that Tyrrell had died in extreme want, and from very despair. Will you credit, that at hearing this news, my first sensations were only rage and disappointment? True, he had died, died in all the misery my heart could wish, but *I had not seen* him die; and the death-bed seemed to me robbed of its bitterest pang.

"I know not to this day, though I have often questioned him, what interest Thornton had in deceiving me by this tale; for my own part, I believe that he himself was deceived;* certain it is (for I inquired), that a person, very much answering to Tyrrell's description, had perished in the state Thornton mentioned; and this might, therefore, in all probability, have misled him.

"I left Paris, and returned, through Normandy, to England (where I remained some weeks); there we again met: but I think we did *not* meet till I had been persecuted by the insolence

* It seems (from subsequent investigation) that this was really the case.

and importunity of Thornton. The tools of our passions cut both ways ; like the monarch, who employed strange beasts in his army, we find our treacherous allies less destructive to others than ourselves. But I was not of a temper to brook the tauntings, or the encroachment of my own creature ; it had been with but an ill grace that I had endured his familiarity, when I absolutely required his services, much less could I suffer his intrusion when those services—services not of love, but hire—were no longer necessary. Thornton, like all persons of his stamp, has a low pride, which I was constantly offending. He had mixed with men, more than my equals in rank, on a familiar footing, and he could ill brook the hauteur with which my disgust at his character absolutely constrained me to treat him. It is true, that the profuseness of my liberality was such, that the mean wretch stomached affronts for which he was so largely paid ; but, with the cunning and malicious spite natural to him, he knew well how to repay them in kind. While he assisted, he affected to ridicule, my revenge ; and though he soon saw that he durst not, for his very life, breathe a syllable openly against Gertrude, or her memory, yet he contrived, by general remarks, and covert insinuations, to gall me to the very quick, and in the very tenderest point. Thus a deep and cordial antipathy to each other arose, and grew, and strengthened, till, I believe, like the fiends in hell, our mutual hatred became our common punishment.

“ No sooner had I returned to England, than I found him here, awaiting my arrival. He favoured me with frequent visits and requests for money. Although not possessed of any secret really important affecting my character, he knew well, that he was possessed of one important to my

quiet ; and he availed himself to the utmost of my strong and deep aversion even to the most delicate recurrence to my love to Gertrude, and its unhallowed and disastrous termination. At length, however, he wearied me. I found that he was sinking into the very dregs and refuse of society, and I could not longer brook the idea of enduring his familiarity and feeding his vices.

“ I pass over any detail of my own feelings, as well as my *outward* and *worldly* history. Over my mind, a great change had passed ; I was no longer torn by violent and contending passions ; upon the tumultuous sea a dead and heavy torpor had fallen ; the very winds, necessary for health, had ceased ;

‘ I slept on the abyss without a surge.’

One violent and engrossing passion is among the worst of all *immoralities*, for it leaves the mind too stagnant and exhausted for those activities and energies which constitute our real duties. However, now that the tyrant feeling of my mind was removed, I endeavoured to shake off the apathy it had produced, and return to the various occupations and business of life. Whatever could divert me from my own dark memories, or give a momentary motion to the stagnation of my mind, I grasped at with the fondness and eagerness of a child. Thus, you found me surrounding myself with luxuries which palled upon my taste the instant that their novelty had passed : *now* striving for the vanity of literary fame ; *now*, for the emptier baubles which riches could procure. At one time I shrouded myself in my closet, and brooded over the dogmas of the learned, and the errors of the wise ; at another, I plunged into the more engrossing and active pursuits of the living crowd which rolled around me,—and flattered my heart that amidst the applause

of senators, and the whirlpool of affairs, I could lull to rest the voices of the past, and the spectre of the dead.

"Whether these hopes were effectual, and the struggle not in vain, this haggard and wasting form, drooping day by day into the grave, can declare; but I said I would not dwell long upon this part of my history, nor is it necessary. Of one thing only, not connected with the main part of my confessions, it is right, for the sake of one tender and guiltless being, that I should speak.

"In the cold and friendless world with which I mixed, there was a heart which had years ago given itself wholly up to me. At that time I was ignorant of the gift I so little deserved, or (for it was before I knew Gertrude) I might have returned it, and been saved years of crime and anguish. Since then, the person I allude to had married, and, by the death of her husband, was once more free. Intimate with my family, and more especially with my sister, she now met me constantly; her compassion for the change she perceived in me, both in mind and person, was stronger than even her reserve, and this is the only reason why I speak of an attachment which ought otherwise to be concealed: I believe that you already understand to whom I allude, and since you have discovered her weakness, it is right that you should know also her virtue; it is right that you should learn, that it was not in her the fantasy, or passion of a moment, but a long and secreted love; that you should learn, that it was her pity, and no unfeminine disregard to opinion, which betrayed her into imprudence, and that she is, at this moment, innocent of everything, but the folly of loving me.

"I pass on to the time when I discovered that I had been, either intentionally or unconsciously, deceived,

and that my enemy yet lived! *lived* in honour, prosperity, and the world's blessings. This information was like removing a barrier from a stream hitherto pent into quiet and restraint. All the stormy thoughts, feelings, and passions, so long at rest, rushed again into a terrible and tumultuous action. The newly formed stratum of my mind was swept away; everything seemed a wreck, a chaos, a convulsion of jarring elements; but this is a trite and tame description of my feelings; words would be but common-place to express the revulsion which I experienced: yet, amidst all, there was one paramount and presiding thought, to which the rest were as atoms in the heap—the awakened thought of vengeance!—but how was it to be gratified?

"Placed as Tyrrell now was in the scale of society, every method of retribution but the one formerly rejected, seemed at an end. To that one, therefore, weak and merciful as it appeared to me, I resorted—you took my challenge to Tyrrell—you remember his behaviour—Conscience doth indeed make cowards of us all! The letter inclosed to me in his to you, contained only the common-place argument urged so often by those who have injured us: viz. the reluctance at attempting our life after having ruined our happiness. When I found that he had left London my rage knew no bounds; I was absolutely frantic with indignation; the earth reeled before my eyes; I was almost suffocated by the violence - the *whirl pool*—of my emotions. I gave myself no time to think,—I left town in pursuit of my foe.

"I found that—still addicted, though, I believe, not so madly as before, to his old amusements—he was in the neighbourhood of Newmarket, awaiting the races, shortly to ensue. No sooner did I find his address, than I wrote him another challenge, still

more forcibly and insultingly worded than the one you took. In this I said that his refusal was of no avail ; that I had sworn that my vengeance should overtake him ; and that sooner or later, in the face of heaven and despite of hell, my oath should be fulfilled. Remember those words, Pelham, I shall refer to them hereafter.

"Tyrrell's reply was short and contemptuous ; he affected to treat me as a madman. Perhaps (and I confess that the incoherence of my letter authorised such suspicion) he believed I really was one. He concluded by saying, that if he received more of my letters, he should shelter himself from my aggressions by the protection of the law.

"On receiving this reply, a stern, sullen, iron spirit entered into my bosom. I betrayed no external mark of passion ; I sat down in silence—I placed the letter and Gertrude's picture before me. There, still and motionless, I remained for hours. I remember well, I was awakened from my gloomy reverie by the clock, as it struck the first hour of the morning. At that lone and ominous sound, the associations of romance and dread which the fables of our childhood connect with it, rushed coldly and fearfully into my mind ; the damp dews broke out upon my forehead, and the blood curdled in my limbs. In that moment I knelt down and vowed a frantic and deadly oath—the words of which I would not now dare to repeat—that before three days expired, hell should no longer be cheated of its prey. I rose—I flung myself on my bed, *and slept*.

"The next day I left my abode. I purchased a strong and swift horse, and, disguising myself from head to foot in a long horseman's cloak, I set off alone, locking in my heart the calm and cold conviction, that my oath should be kept. I placed, con-

cealed in my dress, two pistols my intention was to follow Tyrrell wherever he went, till we could find ourselves alone, and without the chance of intrusion. It was then my determination to *force* him into a contest, and that no trembling of the hand, no error of the swimming sight, might betray my purpose, to place us foot to foot, and the mouth of each pistol almost to the very temple of each antagonist. Nor was I deterred for a moment from this resolution by the knowledge that my own death must be as certain as my victim's. On the contrary, I looked forward to dying thus, and so baffling the more lingering, but not less sure, disease, which was daily wasting me away, with the same fierce, yet not unquiet delight with which men have rushed into battle, and sought out a death less bitter to them than life.

"For two days, though I each day saw Tyrrell, fate threw into my way no opportunity of executing my design. The morning of the third came—Tyrrell was on the race ground : sure that he would remain there for some hours, I put up my wearied horse in the town, and, seating myself in an obscure corner of the course, was contented with watching, as the serpent does his victim, the distant motions of my enemy. Perhaps you can recollect passing a man seated on the ground, and robed in a horseman's cloak. I need not tell you that it was I whom you passed and accosted. I saw you ride by me ; but the moment you were gone I forgot the occurrence. I looked upon the rolling and distant crowd, as a child views the figures of the phantasmagoria, scarcely knowing if my eyes deceived me, feeling impressed with some stupifying and ghastly sensation of dread, and cherishing the conviction that my life was not as the life of the creatures that passed before me.

"The day waned—I went back for

my horse—I returned to the course, and, keeping at a distance as little suspicious as possible, followed the motions of Tyrrell. He went back to the town—rested there—repaired to a gaming table—stayed in it a short time—returned to his inn, and ordered his horse.

“In all these motions I followed the object of my pursuit; and my heart bounded with joy when I, at last, saw him set out alone, and in the advancing twilight. I followed him till he left the main road. Now, I thought, was my time. I redoubled my pace, and had nearly reached him, when some horsemen appearing, constrained me again to slacken my pace. Various other similar interruptions occurred to delay my plot. At length all was undisturbed. I spurred my horse, and was nearly on the heels of my enemy, when I perceived him join another man—this was *you*—I clenched my teeth, and drew my breath, as I once more retreated to a distance. In a short time two men passed me, and I found, that, owing to some accident on the road, they stopped to assist you. It appears by your evidence on a subsequent event, that these men were Thornton and his friend Dawson: at the time, they passed too rapidly, and I was too much occupied in my own dark thoughts, to observe them: still I kept up to you and Tyrrell, sometimes catching the outline of your figures through the moonlight, at others, (with the acute sense of anxiety,) only just distinguishing the clang of your horses’ hoofs on the stony ground. At last, a heavy shower came on; imagine my joy, when Tyrrell left you and rode off alone!

“I passed you, and followed my enemy as fast as my horse would permit; but it was not equal to Tyrrell’s, which was almost at its full speed. However, I came, at last, to a very steep, and almost precipitous, descent.

I was forced to ride slowly and cautiously; this, however, I the less regarded, from my conviction that Tyrrell must be obliged to use the same precaution. My hand was on my pistol with the grasp of premeditated revenge, when a shrill, sharp solitary cry broke on my ear.

“No sound followed—all was silence. I was just approaching towards the close of the descent, when a horse without its rider passed me. The shower had ceased, and the moon broken from the cloud some minutes before; by its light, I recognised the horse rode by Tyrrell; perhaps, I thought, it has thrown its master, and my victim will now be utterly in my power. I pushed hastily forward in spite of the hill, not yet wholly passed. I came to a spot of singular desolation—it was a broad patch of waste land, a pool of water was on the right, and a remarkable and withered tree hung over it. I looked round, but saw nothing of life stirring. A dark and imperfectly developed object lay by the side of the pond—I pressed forward—merciful God! my enemy had escaped my hand, and lay in the stillness of death before me!”

“What!” I exclaimed, interrupting Glanville, for I could contain myself no longer, “it was not by *you* then that Tyrrell fell?” With these words I grasped his hand; and, excited as I had been by my painful and wrought-up interest in his recital, I burst into tears of gratitude and joy. Reginald Glanville was innocent—Ellen was not the sister of an assassin! After a short pause, Glanville continued—

“I gazed upon the upward and distorted face, in a deep and sickening silence; an awe, dark and undefined, crept over my heart; I stood beneath the solemn and sacred heavens, and felt that the hand of God was upon me—that a mysterious and fearful edict had gone forth—that my headlong

And unholy wrath had, in the very midst of its fury, been checked, as if but the idle anger of a child—that the plan I had laid in the foolish wisdom of my heart, had been traced, step by step, by an all-seeing eye, and baffled in the moment of its fancied success, by an inscrutable and awful doom. I had wished the death of my enemy—lo! my wish was accomplished—*how*, I neither knew nor guessed—there, a still and senseless clod of earth, without power of offence or injury, he lay beneath my feet—it seemed as if, in the moment of my uplifted arm, the Divine Avenger had asserted His prerogative—as if the angel which had smitten the Assyrian, had again swept forth, though against a meaner victim—and, while he punished the guilt of a human criminal, had set an eternal barrier to the vengeance of a human foe!

“I dismounted from my horse, and bent over the murdered man. I drew from my bosom the miniature, which never forsook me, and bathed the lifeless resemblance of Gertrude in the blood of her betrayer. Scarcely had I done so, before my ear caught the sounds of steps; hastily I thrust, as I thought, the miniature in my bosom, remounted, and rode hurriedly away. At that hour, and for many which succeeded to it, I believe that all sense was suspended. I was like a man haunted by a dream, and wandering under its influence; or, as one whom a spectre pursues, and for whose eye, the breathing and busy world is but as a land of unreal forms and flitting shadows, teeming with the monsters of darkness, and the terrors of the tomb.

“It was not till the next day that I missed the picture. I returned to the spot—searched it carefully, but in vain—the miniature could not be found; I returned to town, and shortly afterwards the newspapers informed me of what had subsequently occurred. I

saw, with dismay, that all appearances pointed to me as the criminal, and that the officers of justice were at that moment tracing the clue which my cloak, and the colour of my horse, afforded them. My mysterious pursuit of Tyrrell: the disguise I had assumed; the circumstance of my passing you on the road, and of my flight when you approached, all spoke volumes against me. A stronger evidence yet remained, and it was reserved for Thornton to indicate it—at this moment my life is in his hands. Shortly after my return to town, he forced his way into my room, shut the door—bolted it—and, the moment we were alone, said, with a savage and fiendish grin of exultation and defiance,—‘Sir Reginald Glanville, you have many a time and oft insulted me with your pride, and more with your gifts: now it is my time to insult and triumph over you—know that one word of mine could sentence you to the gibbet.’

“He then minutely summed up the evidence against me, and drew from his pocket the threatening letter I had last written to Tyrrell. You remember that therein I said my vengeance was sworn against him, and that, sooner or later, it should overtake him. ‘Couple,’ said Thornton, coldly, as he replaced the letter in his pocket—‘couple these words with the evidence already against you, and I would not buy your life at a farthing’s value.’

“How Thornton came by this paper, so important to my safety, I know not: but when he read it, I was startled by the danger it brought upon me: one glance sufficed to show me that I was utterly at the mercy of the villain who stood before me: he saw and enjoyed my struggles.

“‘Now,’ said he, ‘we know each other;—at present I want a thousand pounds; you will not refuse it me, I am sure; when it is gone I shall call

again; till then you can do without me.' I flung him a cheque for the money, and he departed.

"You may conceive the mortification I endured in this sacrifice of pride to prudence: but those were no ordinary motives which induced me to submit to it. Fast approaching to the grave, it mattered to me but little whether a violent death should shorten a life to which a limit was already set, and which I was far from being anxious to retain: but I could not endure the thought of bringing upon my mother and my sister, the wretchedness and shame which the mere suspicion of a crime so enormous, would occasion them; and when my eye caught all the circumstances arrayed against me, my pride seemed to suffer a less mortification even in the course I adopted than in the thought of the felon's gaol, and the criminal's trial; the hoots and execrations of the mob, and the death and ignominious remembrance of the murderer.

"Stronger than either of these motives, was my shrinking and loathing aversion to whatever seemed likely to unrip the secret history of the past. I sickened at the thought of Gertrude's name and fate being bared to the vulgar eye, and exposed to the comment, the strictures, the ridicule of the gaping and curious public. It seemed to me, therefore, but a very poor exertion of philosophy to conquer my feelings of humiliation at Thornton's insolence and triumph, and to console myself with the reflection, that a few months must rid me alike of his exactions and my life.

"But, of late, Thornton's persecutions and demands have risen to such a height, that I have been scarcely able to restrain my indignation and control myself into compliance. The struggle is too powerful for my frame; it is rapidly bringing on the fiercest and the last contest I shall suffer,

before 'the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest.' Some days since, I came to a resolution, which I am now about to execute; it is to leave this country and take refuge on the continent. There I shall screen myself from Thornton's pursuit, and the danger which it entails upon me; and there, unknown and undisturbed, I shall await the termination of my disease.

"But two duties remained to me to fulfil before I departed; I have now discharged them both. One was due to the warm-hearted and noble being who honoured me with her interest and affection—the other to you. I went yesterday to the former; I sketched the outline of that history which I have detailed to you. I showed her the waste of my barren heart, and spoke to her of the disease which was wearing me away. How beautiful is the love of woman! She would have followed me over the world—received my last sigh, and seen me to the rest I shall find, at length; and this without a hope, or thought of recompense, even from the worthlessness of my love.

"But, enough!—of her my farewell has been taken. Your suspicions I have seen and forgiven—for they were natural; it was due to me to remove them: the pressure of your hand tells me, that I have done so: but I had another reason for my confessions. I have worn away the romance of my heart, and I have now no indulgence for the little delicacies and petty scruples which often stand in the way of our real happiness. I have marked your former addresses to Ellen, and, I confess, with great joy; for I know, amidst all your worldly ambition, and the encrusted artificiality of your exterior, how warm and generous is your real heart—how noble and intellectual is your real mind: and were my sister tenfold more perfect than ✓

believe her, I do not desire to find on earth one more deserving of her than yourself. I have remarked your late estrangement from Ellen ; and, while I *guessed*, I felt that, however painful to me, I ought to *remove*, the cause : she loves you—though, perhaps, you know it not—much and truly ; and since my earlier life has been passed in a selfish inactivity, I would fain let it close with the reflection of **having**

served two beings whom I prize so dearly, and the hope that their happiness will commence with my death.

“ And now, Pelham, I have done ; I am weak and exhausted, and cannot bear more—even of your society, now. Think over what I have last said, and let me see you again to-morrow ; on the day after, I leave England for ever.”

CHAPTER LXXVI.

* * * * *

But wilt thou accept not

The worship the heart lifts above,

And the Heavens reject not.

The desire of the moth for the star,

Of the night for the morrow,

The devotion to something afar

From the sphere of our sorrow ?—P. B. SHELLEY.

It was not with a light heart—for I loved Glanville too well, not to be powerfully affected by his awful history—but with a chastised and sober joy, that I now beheld my friend innocent of the guilt of which my suspicions had accused him, while the only obstacle to my marriage with his sister was removed. True it was that the sword yet hung over his head, and that while he lived, there could be no rational assurance of his safety from the disgrace and death of the felon. In the world's eye, therefore, the barrier to my union with Ellen would have been far from being wholly removed; but, at that moment, my disappointments had disgusted me with the world, and I turned with a double yearning of heart to her whose pure and holy love could be at once my recompense and retreat.

Nor was this selfish consideration my only motive in the conduct I was resolved to adopt; on the contrary, it was scarcely more prominent in my mind, than those derived from giving to a friend who was now dearer to me than ever, his only consolation on this earth, and to Ellen the safest protection, in case of any danger to her brother. With these, it is true, were mingled feelings which, in happier circumstances, might have been those of transport at a bright and successful termination to a deep and devoted love; but these I had, while Glan-

ville's very life was so doubtful, little right to indulge, and I checked them as soon as they arose.

After a sleepless night I repaired to Lady Glanville's house. It was long since I had been there, and the servant who admitted me seemed somewhat surprised at the earliness of my visit. I desired to see the mother, and waited in the parlour till she came. I made but a scanty exordium to my speech. In very few words I expressed my love to Ellen, and besought her mediation in my behalf; nor did I think it would be a slight consideration in my favour, with the fond mother, to mention Glanville's approbation of my suit.

"Ellen is up stairs in the drawing-room," said Lady Glanville. "I will go and prepare her to receive you—if you have her consent, you have mine."

"Will you suffer me then," said I, "to forestal you? Forgive my impatience, and let me see her before you do."

Lady Glanville was a woman of the good old school, and stood somewhat upon forms and ceremonies. I did not, therefore, await the answer, which I foresaw might not be favourable to my success, but with my customary assurance, left the room, and hastened up stairs. I entered the drawing-room, and shut the door. Ellen was at the far end; and as I entered with a light step, she did not perceive me till I was close by.

She started when she saw me; and her cheek, before very pale, deepened into crimson. "Good Heavens! is it you!" she said falteringly. "I—I thought—but—but excuse me for an instant, I will call my mother."

"Stay for one instant, I beseech you—it is from your mother that I come—she has referred me to you." And with a trembling and hurried voice, for all my usual boldness forsook me, I poured forth, in rapid and burning words, the history of my secret and hoarded love—its doubts, fears, and hopes.

Ellen sank back on her chair, overpowered and silent by her feelings, and the vehemence of my own. I knelt, and took her hand; I covered it with my kisses—it was not withdrawn from them. I raised my eyes, and beheld in hers all that my heart had hoped, but did not dare to portray.

"You—you," said she—when at last she found words—"I imagined that you only thought of ambition and the world—I could not have dreamt of this." She ceased, blushing and embarrassed.

"It is true," said I, "that you had a right to think so, for, till this moment, I have never opened to you

even a glimpse of my veiled heart, and its secret and wild desires; but do you think that my love was the less a treasure, because it was hidden? or the less deep, because it was cherished at the bottom of my soul? No—no; believe me, *that* love was not to be mingled with the ordinary objects of life—it was too pure to be profaned by the levities and follies which are all of my nature that I have permitted myself to develope to the world. Do not imagine, that, because I have seemed an idler with the idle—selfish with the interested—and cold, and vain, and frivolous, with those to whom such qualities were both a passport and a virtue; do not imagine that I have concealed within me nothing more worthy of you and of myself; my very love for you shows that I am wiser and better than I have seemed. Speak to me, Ellen—may I call you by that name—one word—one syllable! speak to me, and tell me that you have read my heart, and that you will not reject it!"

There came no answer from those dear lips; but their soft and tender smile told me that I might hope. That hour I still recall and bless! that hour was the happiest of my life.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

A thousand crowns, or else lay down your head.—2nd Part of Henry VI.

FROM Ellen, I hastened to the house of Sir Reginald. The hall was in all the confusion of approaching departure. I sprang over the paraphernalia of books and boxes which obstructed my way, and bounded up the stairs. Glanville was, as usual, alone: his countenance was less pale than it had been lately, and when I saw it brighten as I approached, I hoped, in the new happiness of my heart, that he might baffle both his enemy and his disease.

I told him all that had just occurred between Ellen and myself. "And now," said I, as I clasped his hand, "I have a proposal to make, to which you must accede: let me accompany you abroad; I will go with you to whatever corner of the world you may select. We will plan together every possible method of concealing our retreat. Upon the past I will never speak to you. In your hours of solitude I will never disturb you by an unwelcome and ill-timed sympathy. I will tend upon you, watch over you, bear with you, with more than the love and tenderness of a brother. You shall see me only when you wish it. Your loneliness shall never be invaded. When you get better, as I presage you will, I will leave you to come back to England, and provide for the worst, by ensuring your sister a protector. I will then return to you alone, that your seclusion may not be endangered by the knowledge, even of Ellen, and you shall have me by your side till—till—"

"The last!" interrupted Glanville. "Too—too generous Pelham, I feel—these tears (the first I have shed for a long, long time) tell you, that I feel

to the heart—your friendship and disinterested attachment; but in the moment your love for Ellen has become successful, I will not tear you from its enjoyment. Believe me, all that I could derive from your society, could not afford me half the happiness I should have in knowing that you and Ellen were blest in each other. No—no, my solitude will, at that reflection, be deprived of its sting. You shall hear from me once again; my letter shall contain a request, and your executing that last favour must console and satisfy the kindness of your heart. For myself, I shall die as I have lived—*alone*. All fellowship with my griefs would seem to me strange and unwelcome."

I would not suffer Glanville to proceed. I interrupted him with fresh arguments and entreaties, to which he seemed at last to submit, and I was in the firm hope of having conquered his determination, when we were startled by a sudden and violent noise in the hall.

"It is Thornton," said Glanville, calmly. "I told them not to admit him, and he is forcing his way."

Scarcely had Sir Reginald said this, before Thornton burst abruptly into the room.

Although it was scarcely noon, he was more than half intoxicated, and his eyes swam in his head with a maudlin expression of triumph and insolence as he rolled towards us.

"Oh, oh! Sir Reginald," he said, "thought of giving me the slip, eh? Your domestic servants said you were out; but I soon silenced them. 'Egad I made them as nimble as cows in a

cage—I have not learnt the use of my fists for nothing. So, you're going abroad to-morrow; without my leave, too,—pretty good joke that, indeed. Come, come, my brave fellow, you need not scowl at me in that way. Why, you look as surly as a butcher's dog with a broken head."

Glanville, who was livid with ill-suppressed rage, rose haughtily.

"Mr. Thornton," he said, in a calm voice, although he was trembling in his extreme passion, from head to foot, "I am not now prepared to submit to your insolence and intrusion. You will leave this room instantly. If you have any further demands upon me, I will hear them to-night, at any hour you please to appoint."

"No, no, my fine fellow," said Thornton, with a coarse chuckle; "you have as much wit as three folks,—two fools, and a madman! but you won't *do me*, for all that. The instant my back is turned, yours will be turned too; and by the time I call again, your honour will be half way to Calais. But—bless my stars, Mr. Pelham, is that you? I really did not see you before; I suppose you are not in the secret?"

"I have no secrets from Mr. Pelham," said Glanville; "nor do I care if you discuss the whole of your nefarious transactions with me in his presence. Since you doubt my word, it is beneath my dignity to vindicate it, and your business can as well be despatched now, as hereafter. You have heard rightly, that I intend leaving England to-morrow: and now, sir, what is your will?"

"By G—, Sir Reginald Glanville!" exclaimed Thornton, who seemed stung to the quick by Glanville's contemptuous coldness, "you shall *not* leave England without my leave. Ay, you may frown, but I say you shall not; nay, you shall not budge a foot from this very room unless I cry, 'Be it so!'"

Glanville could no longer restrain himself. He would have sprung towards Thornton, but I seized and arrested him. I read, in the malignant and incensed countenance of his persecutor, all the danger to which a single imprudence would have exposed him, and I trembled for his safety.

I whispered, as I forced him again to his seat, "Leave me alone to settle with this man, and I will endeavour to free you from him." I did not tarry for his answer, but, turning to Thornton, said to him coolly but civilly; "Sir Reginald Glanville has acquainted me with the nature of your very extraordinary demands upon him. Did he adopt my advice, he would immediately place the affair in the hands of his legal advisers. His ill health, however, his anxiety to leave England, and his wish to sacrifice almost everything to quiet, induce him, rather than take this alternative, to silence your importunities, by acceding to claims, however illegal and unjust. If, therefore, you now favour Sir Reginald with your visit, for the purpose of making a demand previous to his quitting England, and which, consequently, will be the last to which he will concede, you will have the goodness to name the amount of your claim, and should it be reasonable, I think Sir Reginald will authorise me to say that it shall be granted."

"Well, now!" cried Thornton, "that's what I call talking like a sensible man: and though I am not fond of speaking to a third person, when the principal is present, yet as you have always been very civil to me, I have no objection to treating with you. Please to give Sir Reginald this paper: if he will but take the trouble to sign it, he may go to the Falls of Niagara for me! I won't interrupt him—so he had better put pen to paper, and get rid of me at once, for I know I am as welcome as snow in harvest."

I took the paper, which was folded up, and gave it to Glanville, who leant back on his chair, half exhausted by rage. He glanced his eye over it, and then tore it into a thousand pieces, and trampled it beneath his feet: "Go!" exclaimed he, "go, rascal, and do your worst! I will not make myself a beggar to enrich you. My whole fortune would but answer this demand."

"Do as you please, Sir Reginald," answered Thornton, grinning, "do as you please. It's not a long walk from hence to Bow-street, nor a long swing from Newgate to the gallows; do as you please, Sir Reginald, do as you please!" and the villain flung himself at full length on the ottoman, and eyed Glanville's countenance with an easy and malicious effrontery, which seemed to say, "I know you will struggle, but you cannot help yourself."

I took Glanville aside: "My dear friend," said I, "believe me, that I share your indignation to the utmost; but we must do anything rather than incense this wretch: what is his demand?"

"I speak literally," replied Glanville, "when I say, that it covers nearly the whole of my fortune, except such lands as are entailed upon the male heir; for my habits of extravagance have very much curtailed my means: it is the exact sum I had set apart, for a marriage gift to my sister, in addition to her own fortune."

"Then," said I, "you shall give it him; your sister has no longer any necessity for a portion: her marriage with me prevents *that*—and with regard to yourself, your wants are not many—such as it is, you can share my fortune."

"No—no—no!" cried Glanville; and his generous nature lashing him into fresh rage, he broke from my grasp, and moved menacingly to Thornton. That person still lay on the ottoman, regarding us with an air half contemptuous, half exulting.

"Leave the room instantly," said Glanville, "or you will repent it!"

"What! another murder, Sir Reginald!" said Thornton. "No, I am not a sparrow, to have my neck wrenched by a woman's hand like yours. Give me my demand—sign the paper, and I will leave you for ever and a day."

"I will commit no such folly," answered Glanville. "If you will accept five thousand pounds, you shall have that sum; but were the rope on my neck, you should not wring from me a farthing more!"

"Five thousand!" repeated Thornton; "a mere drop—a child's toy—why, you are playing with me, Sir Reginald—nay, I am a reasonable man, and will abate a trifle or so of my just claims, but you must not take advantage of my good nature. Make me snug and easy for life—let me keep a brace of hunters—a cosy box—a bit of land to it, and a girl after my own heart, and I'll say quits with you. Now, Mr. Pelham, who is a long headed gentleman, and does not *sport on his own blanket*, knows well enough that one can't do all this for five thousand pounds; make it a thousand a year—that is, give me a cool twenty thousand—and I won't exact another sou. Egad, this drinking makes one deuced thirsty—Mr. Pelham, just reach me that glass of water—I *hear bees in my head!*"

Seeing that I did not stir, Thornton rose, with an oath against pride; and swaggering towards the table, took up a tumbler of water, which happened accidentally to be there: close by it was the picture of the ill-fated Gertrude. The gambler, who was evidently so intoxicated as to be scarcely conscious of his motions or words, (otherwise, in all probability, he would, to borrow from himself a proverb illustrative of his profession, have played his cards better,) took up the portrait.

Glanville saw the action, and was by his side in an instant. "Touch it not with your accursed hands!" he cried, in an ungovernable fury. "Leave your hold this instant, or I will dash you to pieces."

Thornton kept a firm gripe of the picture. "Here's a to-do!" said he, tauntingly: "was there ever such work about a poor —— (using a word too coarse for repetition) before?"

The word had scarcely passed his lips, when he was stretched at his full length upon the ground. Nor did Glanville stop there. With all the strength of his nervous frame, fully requited for the debility of disease by the fury of the moment, he seized the gamester as if he had been an infant, and dragged him to the door: the next moment, I heard his heavy frame rolling down the stairs with no decorous slowness of descent.

Glanville re-appeared. "Good Heavens!" I cried, "what have you done?" But he was too lost in his still unappeased rage to heed me. He leaned, panting and breathless, against the wall, with clenched teeth, and a flashing eye, rendered more terribly bright by the feverish lustre natural to his disease.

Presently I heard Thornton re-ascend the stairs; he opened the door, and entered but one pace. Never did human face wear a more fiendish expression of malevolence and wrath. "Sir Reginald Glanville," he said, "I thank you heartily. He must have iron nails who scratches a bear. You have sent me a challenge, and the hangman shall bring you my answer. Good day, Sir Reginald—good day, Mr. Pelham;" and so saying, he shut the door, and, rapidly descending the stairs was out of the house in an instant.

"There is no time to be lost," said I; "order post horses to your carriage, and be gone instantly."

"You are wrong," replied Glanville, slowly recovering himself "I must

not fly; it would be worse than useless; it would seem the strongest argument against me. Remember that if Thornton has really gone to inform against me, the officers of justice would arrest me long before I reached Calais; or even if I did elude their pursuit so far, I should be as much in their power in France as in England: but, to tell you the truth, I do not think Thornton *will* inform. Money, to a temper like his, is a stronger temptation than revenge; and, before he has been three minutes in the air, he will perceive the folly of losing the golden harvest he may yet make of me, for the sake of a momentary passion. No: my best plan will be to wait here till to-morrow, as I originally intended. In the meanwhile he will, in all probability, pay me another visit, and I will make a compromise with his demands."

Despite my fears, I could not but see the justice of these observations, the more especially as a still stronger argument than any urged by Glanville, forced itself on my mind; this was my internal conviction, that Thornton himself was guilty of the murder of Tyrrell, and that, therefore, he would, for his own sake, avoid the new and particularising scrutiny into that dreadful event, which his accusation of Glanville would necessarily occasion.

Both of us were wrong. Villains have passions as well as honest men; and they will, therefore, forfeit their own interest in obedience to those passions, while the calculations of prudence invariably suppose, that that interest is their *only* rule.

Glanville was so enfeebled by his late excitement, that he besought me once more to leave him to himself. I did so, under a promise that he would admit me again in the evening; for notwithstanding my persuasion that Thornton would not put his threats into execution, I could not conquer a latent foreboding of dread and evil

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

Away with him to prison—where is the provost?—*Measure for Measure.*

I RETURNED home, perplexed by a thousand contradictory thoughts upon the scene I had just witnessed; the more I reflected, the more I regretted the fatality of the circumstances that had tempted Glanville to accede to Thornton's demand. True it was, that Thornton's self-regard might be deemed a sufficient guarantee for his concealment of such extortionate transactions: moreover, it was difficult to say, when the formidable array of appearances against Glanville was considered, whether any other line of conduct than that which he had adopted, could, with safety, have been pursued.

His feelings, too, with regard to the unfortunate Gertrude, I could fully enter into, and sympathise with; but, in spite of all these considerations, it was with an inexpressible aversion that I contemplated the idea of that tacit confession of guilt, which his compliance with Thornton's exactions so unhappily implied; it was, therefore, a thought of some satisfaction, that my rash and hasty advice, of a still further concession to those extortions, had not been acceded to. My present intention, in the event of Glanville's persevering to reject my offer of accompanying him, was to remain in England, for the purpose of sifting the murder; nor did I despair of accomplishing this most desirable end, through the means of Dawson; for there was but little doubt in my own mind, that Thornton and himself were the murderers, and I hoped that address or intimidation might win a confession from Dawson, although it

might probably be unavailing with his hardened and crafty associate.

Occupied with these thoughts, I endeavoured to while away the hours till the evening summoned me once more to the principal object of my reflections. The instant Glanville's door was opened, I saw, by one glance, that I had come too late; the whole house was in confusion; several of the servants were in the hall, conferring with each other, with that mingled mystery and agitation which always accompany the fears and conjectures of the lower classes. I took aside the valet, who had lived with Glanville for some years, and who was remarkably attached to his master, and learned, that, somewhat more than an hour before, Mr. Thornton had returned to the house, accompanied by three men of very suspicious appearance. "In short, sir," said the man, lowering his voice to a whisper, "I knew one of them by sight; he was Mr. S., the Bow-street officer; with these men, Sir Reginald left the house, merely saying, in his usual quiet manner, that he did not know when he should return."

I concealed my perturbation, and endeavoured, as far as I was able, to quiet the evident apprehensions of the servant. "At all events, Seymour," said I, "I know that I may trust you sufficiently to warn you against mentioning the circumstance any farther; above all, let me beg of you to stop the mouths of those idle loiterers in the hall—and be sure that you do not give any unnecessary alarm to Lady and Miss Glanville."

The poor man promised, with tears in his eyes, that he would obey my injunctions; and, with a calm face, but a sickening heart, I turned away from the house. I knew not whither to direct my wanderings; fortunately I recollected that I should, in all probability, be among the first witnesses summoned on Glanville's examination, and that, perhaps, by the time I reached home, I might already receive an intimation to that effect; accordingly, I retraced my steps, and, on re-entering my hotel, was told by the waiter, with a mysterious air, that a gentleman was waiting to see me. Seated by the window in my room, and wiping his forehead with a red silk pocket handkerchief, was a short thickset man, with a fiery and rugose complexion, not altogether unlike the aspect of a mulberry: from underneath a pair of shaggy brows peeped two singularly small eyes, which made ample amends, by their fire, for their deficiency in size—they were black, brisk, and somewhat fierce in their expression. A nose of that shape vulgarly termed bottled, formed the "arch sublime," the bridge, the twilight, as it were, between the purple sun-set of one cheek, and the glowing sun-rise of the other. His mouth was small, and drawn up at each corner, like a purse—there was something sour and crabbed about it; if it *was* like a purse, it was the purse of a miser: a fair round chin had not been condemned to single blessedness—on the contrary, it was like a farmer's pillion, and carried double; on either side of a very low forehead, hedged round by closely mowed bristles of a dingy black, was an enormous ear, of the same intensely rubicund colour as that inflamed pendant of flesh which adorns the throat of an enraged turkey-cock;—ears so large, and so red, I never beheld before—they were something preposterous!

This enchanting figure, which was

attired in a sober suit of leaden black, relieved by a long gold watch-chain, and a plentiful decoration of seals, rose at my entrance with a solemn grunt, and a still more solemn bow. I shut the door carefully, and asked him his business. As I had foreseen, it was a request from the magistrate at —, to attend a private examination on the ensuing day.

"Sad thing, sir, sad thing," said Mr. —; "it would be quite shocking to hang a gentleman of Sir Reginald Glanville's quality—so distinguished an orator, too; sad thing, sir,—very sad thing."

"Oh!" said I, quietly, "there is not a doubt as to Sir Reginald's innocence of the crime laid to him; and, probably, Mr. —, I may call in your assistance to-morrow, to ascertain the real murderers—I think I am possessed of some clue."

Mr. — pricked up his ears—those enormous ears! "Sir," he said, "I shall be happy to accompany you—very happy; give me the clue you speak of, and I will soon find the villains. Horrid thing, sir, murder—very horrid. It's too hard that a gentleman cannot take his ride home from a race, or a merry-making, but he must have his throat cut from ear to ear—ear to ear, sir;" and with these words, the speaker's own auricular protuberances seemed, as in conscious horror, to glow with a double carnation.

"Very true, Mr. —!" said I; "say I will certainly attend the examination—till then, good by!" At this hint, my fiery-faced friend made a low bow, and blazed out of the room, like the ghost of a kitchen fire.

Left to myself, I revolved, earnestly and anxiously, every circumstance that could tend to diminish the appearances against Glanville, and direct suspicion to that quarter where I was confident the guilt rested. In this endeavour I passed the time till

morning, when I fell into an uneasy slumber, which lasted some hours; on waking, it was almost time to attend the magistrate's appointment. I dressed hastily, and soon found myself in the room of inquisition.

It is impossible to conceive a more courteous, and yet more equitable man, than the magistrate whom I had the honour of attending. He spoke with great feeling on the subject for which I was summoned—owned to me, that Thornton's statement was very clear and forcible—trusted that my evidence would contradict an account which he was very loth to believe; and then proceeded to the question. I saw, with an agony which I can scarcely express, that all my answers made powerfully against the cause I endeavoured to support. I was obliged to own that a man on horseback passed me soon after Tyrrell had quitted me; that, on coming to the spot where the deceased was found, I saw this same horseman on the very place: that I believed, nay, that I was sure, (how could I evade this?) that this man was Reginald Glanville.

Farther evidence, Thornton had already offered to adduce. He could prove, that the said horseman had been mounted on a grey horse, sold to a person answering exactly to the description of Sir Reginald Glanville; moreover, that that horse was yet in the stables of the prisoner. He produced a letter, which, he said, he had found upon the person of the deceased, signed by Sir Reginald Glanville, and containing the most deadly threats against Sir John Tyrrell's life; and, to crown all, he called upon me to witness, that we had both discovered upon the spot where the murder was committed, a picture belonging to the prisoner, since restored to him, and now in his possession.

At the close of this examination, the worthy magistrate shook his head,

in evident distress! "I have known Sir Reginald Glanville personally," said he: "in private as in public life, I have always thought him the most upright and honourable of men. I feel the greatest pain in saying, that it will be my duty fully to commit him for trial."

I interrupted the magistrate; I demanded that Dawson should be produced. "I have already," said he, "inquired of Thornton respecting that person, whose testimony is of evident importance; he tells me that Dawson has left the country, and can give me no clue to his address."

"He lies!" cried I, in the abrupt anguish of my heart; "his associate *shall* be produced. Hear me, I have been, next to Thornton, the chief witness against the prisoner, and when I swear to you, that, in spite of all appearances, I most solemnly believe in his innocence, you may rely on my assurance, that there are circumstances in his favour which have not yet been considered, but which I will pledge myself hereafter to adduce." I then related to the private ear of the magistrate my firm conviction of the guilt of the accuser himself. I dwelt forcibly upon the circumstance of Tyrrell's having mentioned to me, that Thornton was aware of the large sum he had on his person, and of the strange disappearance of that sum, when his body was examined in the fatal field. After noting how impossible it was that Glanville could have stolen the money, I insisted strongly on the distressed circumstances—the dissolute habits, and the hardened character, of Thornton—I recalled to the mind of the magistrate the singularity of Thornton's absence from home when I called there, and the doubtful nature of his excuse: much more I said, but all equally in vain. The only point where I was successful, was in pressing for a delay, which was granted to the passionate manner in

which I expressed my persuasion that I could confirm my suspicions by much stronger data before the reprieve expired.

"It is very true," said the righteous magistrate, "that there are appearances somewhat against the witness; but certainly not tantamount to anything above a slight suspicion. If, however, you positively think you can

ascertain any facts, to elucidate this mysterious crime, and point the inquiries of justice to another quarter, I will so far strain the question, as to remand the prisoner to another day—let us say the day after to-morrow. If nothing important can before then be found in his favour, he *must* be committed for trial."

CHAPTER LXXIX.

Nihil est furacius illo :

Non fuit Autolycei tam piccata manus.—MARTIAL.

Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo ?—HORAT.

WHEN I left the magistrate, I knew not whither my next step should tend. There was, however, no time to indulge the idle stupor, which Glauville's situation at first occasioned; with a violent effort, I shook it off, and bent all my mind to discover the best method to avail myself, to the utmost, of the short reprieve I had succeeded in obtaining. At length, one of those sudden thoughts which, from their suddenness, appear more brilliant than they really are, flashed upon my mind. I remembered the accomplished character of Mr. Job Jonson, and the circumstance of my having seen him in company with Thornton. Now, although it was not very likely that Thornton should have made Mr. Jonson his confidant, in any of those affairs which it was so essentially his advantage to confine exclusively to himself; yet the acuteness and penetration visible in the character of the worthy Job, might not have lain so fallow during his companionship with Thornton, but that it might have made some discoveries which would considerably assist me in my researches; besides, as it is literally

true in the systematised roguery of London, that "birds of a feather flock together," it was by no means unlikely that the honest Job might be honoured with the friendship of Mr. Dawson, as well as the company of Mr. Thornton; in which case I looked forward with greater confidence to the detection of the notable pair.

I could not, however, conceal from myself, that this was but a very unstable and ill-linked chain of reasoning, and there were moments, when the appearances against Glauville wore so close a semblance of truth, that all my friendship could scarcely drive from my mind an intrusive suspicion that he might have deceived me, and that the accusation might not be groundless.

This unwelcome idea did not, however, at all lessen the rapidity with which I hastened towards the memorable gin-shop, where I had whilom met Mr. Gordon: there I hoped to find either the address of that gentleman, or of the "Club," to which he had taken me, in company with Tringle and Dartmore: either at this said club, or of that said gentleman, I thought it not unlikely that I might

hear some tidings of the person of Mr. Job Jonson—if not, I was resolved to return to the office, and employ Mr. —, my mulberry-cheeked acquaintance of the last night, in search after the holy Job.

Fate saved me a world of trouble: as I was hastily walking onwards, I happened to turn my eyes on the opposite side of the way, and discovered a man dressed in what the newspapers term the very height of fashion, viz.: in the most ostentatious attire that ever flaunted at Margate, or blazed in the *Palais Royal*. The nether garments of this *petit-maitre* consisted of a pair of blue tight pantaloons, profusely braided, and terminating in Hessian boots, adorned with brass spurs of the most burnished resplendency; a black velvet waistcoat, studded with gold stars, was backed by a green frock coat, covered, notwithstanding the heat of the weather, with fur, and frogged and *cordonné* with the most lordly indifference, both as to taste and expense: a small French hat, which might not have been much too large for my lord of —, was set jauntily in the centre of a system of long black curls, which my eye, long accustomed to penetrate the arcana of habilitatory art, discovered at once to be a wig. A fierce black mustachio, very much curled, wandered lovingly from the upper lip towards the eyes, which had an unfortunate prepossession for eccentricity in their direction. To complete the picture, we must suppose some colouring—and this consisted in a very nice and delicate touch of the rouge pot, which could not be called by so harsh a term as paint;—say rather that it was a *tinge*!

No sooner had I set my eyes upon this figure, than I crossed over to the side of the way which it was adorning, and followed its motions at a respectful but observant distance.

At length my *fréquent* marched

into a jeweller's shop in Oxford-street; with a careless air, I affected, two minutes afterwards, to saunter into the same shop; the shopman was showing his *bijouterie* to him of the Hessians with the greatest respect; and, beguiled by the splendour of the wig and waistcoat, turned me over to his apprentice. Another time, I might have been indignant at perceiving that the *air noble*, on which I so much piqued myself, was by no means so universally acknowledged as I had vainly imagined:—at that moment I was too occupied to think of my insulted dignity. While I was pretending to appear wholly engrossed with some seals, I kept a vigilant eye on my superb fellow-customer; at last, I saw him secrete a diamond ring, and thrust it, by a singular movement of the fore finger, up the fur cuff of his capacious sleeve: presently, some other article of minute size disappeared in the like manner.

The gentleman then rose, expressed himself *very well satisfied* by the great taste of the jeweller, said he should look in again on Saturday, when he hoped the set he had ordered would be completed, and gravely took his departure amidst the prodigal bows of the shopman and his helpmates. Meanwhile, I bought a seal of small value, and followed my old acquaintance, for the reader has doubtless discovered, long before this, that the gentleman was no other than Mr. Jon Jonson.

Slowly and struttingly did the man of two virtues perform the whole pilgrimage of Oxford-street. He stopped at Cumberland-gate, and, looking round, with an air of gentlemanlike indecision, seemed to consider whether or not he should join the loungers in the park: fortunately for the well-bred set, his doubts terminated in their favour, and Mr. Job Jonson entered the park. Every one happened to be thronging to Kensington Gardens, and

the man of two virtues accordingly cut across the park as the shortest, but the least frequented way thither, in order to confer upon the seekers of pleasure the dangerous honour of his company.

As soon as I perceived that there were but few persons in the immediate locality to observe me, and that those consisted of a tall guardsman and his wife, a family of young children with their nursery-maid, and a debilitated East India Captain, walking for the sake of his liver, I overtook the incomparable Job, made him a low bow, and thus reverently accosted him—

“Mr. Jonson, I am delighted once more to meet you—suffer me to remind you of the very pleasant morning I passed with you in the neighbourhood of Hampton Court. I perceive, by your mustachios and military dress, that you have entered the army, since that day; I congratulate the British troops on so admirable an acquisition.”

Mr. Jonson's assurance forsook him for a moment, but he lost no time in regaining a quality which was so natural to his character. He assumed a fierce look, and, *relevant sa moustache, sourit amèrement*, like Voltaire's governor*.—“D—me, sir,” he cried, “do you mean to insult me? I know none of your Mr. Jonsons, and I never set my eyes upon you before.”

“Lookye, my dear Mr. Job Jonson,” replied I, “as I can prove not only all I say, but much more that I shall not say—such as your little mistakes just now, at the jeweller's shop in Oxford-street, &c. &c., perhaps it would be better for you not to oblige me to create a mob, and give you in charge—pardon my abruptness of speech—to a constable!—Surely there will be no need of such a disagreeable occurrence, when I assure you, in the first place, that I perfectly forgive you for ridding me of the unnecessary com-

forts of a pocket-book and handkerchief, the unphilosophical appendage of a purse, and the effeminate love token of a gold locket; nor is this all—it is perfectly indifferent to me, whether you levy contributions on jewellers or gentlemen, and I am very far from wishing to intrude upon your harmless occupations, or to interfere with your innocent amusements. I see, Mr. Jonson, that you are beginning to understand me; let me facilitate so desirable an end by an additional information, that, since it is preceded with a promise to open my purse, may tend somewhat to open your heart; I am at this moment, in great want of your assistance—favour me with it, and I will pay you to your soul's content. Are we friends now, Mr. Job Jonson?”

My old friend burst out into a loud laugh. “Well, sir, I must say that your frankness enchants me. I can no longer dissemble with you; indeed, I perceive it would be useless; besides, I always adored candour—it is my favourite virtue. Tell me how I can help you, and you may command my services.”

“One word,” said I: “will you be open and ingenuous with me? I shall ask you certain questions, not in the least affecting your own safety, but to which, if you would serve me, you must give me (and, since candour is your favourite virtue, this will be no difficult task) your most candid replies. To strengthen you in so righteous a course, know also that the said replies will come verbatim before a court of law, and that, therefore, it will be a matter of prudence to shape them as closely to the truth as your inclinations will allow. To counterbalance this information, which, I own, is not very inviting, I repeat that the questions asked you will be wholly foreign to your own affairs, and that, should you prove of that assistance to me which I anticipate, I will so testify my gratitude as to place you beyond the

* Don Fernand d'Ibarra, in the “*Can- tide*.”

necessity of pillaging rural young gentlemen and credulous shopkeepers for the future;—all your present pursuits need thenceforth only be carried on for your private amusement."

"I repeat, that you may command me," returned Mr. Jonson, gracefully putting his hand to his heart.

"Pray, then," said I, "to come at once to the point, how long have you been acquainted with Mr. Thomas Thornton?"

"For some months only," returned Job, without the least embarrassment.

"And Mr. Dawson?" said I.

A slight change came over Jonson's countenance; he hesitated. "Excuse me, sir," said he; "but I am, really, perfectly unacquainted with you, and I may be falling into some trap of the law, of which, Heaven knows, I am as ignorant as a babe unborn."

I saw the knavish justice of this remark: and in my predominating zeal to serve Glanville, I looked upon the *inconvenience* of discovering myself to a pickpocket and sharper, as a consideration not worth attending to. In order, therefore, to remove his doubts, and, at the same time, to have a more secret and undisturbed place for our conference, I proposed to him to accompany me home. At first, Mr. Jonson demurred, but I soon half-persuaded and half-intimidated him into compliance.

Not particularly liking to be publicly seen with a person of his splendid description and celebrated character, I made him walk before me to Mivart's, and I followed him closely, never turning my eye, either to the right or the left, lest he should endeavour to escape me. There was no fear of this, for Mr. Jonson was both a bold and a crafty man, and it required, perhaps, but little of his penetration to discover that I was no officer nor informer, and that my communication had been of a nature likely enough to terminate in his advantage; there was, therefore,

but little need of his courage in accompanying me to my hotel.

There were a good many foreigners of rank at Mivart's, and the waiters took my companion for an ambassador at least:—he received their homage with the mingled dignity and condescension natural to so great a man.

As the day was now far advanced, I deemed it but hospitable to offer Mr. Job Jonson some edible refreshment. With the frankness on which he so justly valued himself, he accepted my proposal. I ordered some cold meat, and two bottles of wine; and, mindful of old maxims, deferred my business till his repast was over. I conversed with him merely upon ordinary topics, and, at another time, should have been much amused by the singular mixture of impudence and shrewdness which formed the stratum of his character.

At length his appetite was satisfied, and one of the bottles emptied; with the other before him, his body easily reclining on my library chair, his eyes apparently cast downwards, but ever and anon glancing up at my countenance with a searching and curious look, Mr. Job Jonson prepared himself for our conference; accordingly I began:—

"You say that you *are* acquainted with Mr. Dawson; where is he at present?"

"I don't know," answered Jonson, laconically.

"Come," said I, "no trifling—if you do not know, you can learn."

"Possibly I can, in the course of time," rejoined honest Job.

"If you cannot tell me his residence at once," said I, "our conference is at an end; that is a leading feature in my inquiries."

Jonson paused before he replied—"You have spoken to me frankly, let us do nothing by halves—tell me, at once, the nature of the service I can do you, and the amount of my reward, and then you shall have my answer.

With respect to Dawson, I will confess to you that I did once know him well, and that we have done many a mad prank together, which I should not like the bugaboos and bulkies to know; you will, therefore, see that I am naturally reluctant to tell you any thing about him, unless your honour will inform me of the why and the wherefore."

I was somewhat startled by this speech, and by the shrewd, cunning eye which dwelt upon me, as it was uttered; but, however, I was by no means sure, that acceding to his proposal would not be my readiest and wisest way to the object I had in view. Nevertheless, there were some preliminary questions to be got over first: perhaps Dawson might be too dear a friend to the candid Job, for the latter to endanger his safety: or perhaps, (and this was more probable,) Jonson might be perfectly ignorant of anything likely to aid me; in this case my communication would be useless; accordingly I said, after a short consideration—

"Patience, my dear Mr. Jonson—patience; you shall know all in good time; meanwhile I must—even for Dawson's sake—question you blindfold. What, now, if your poor friend Dawson were in imminent danger, and you had, if it so pleased you, the power to save him; would you not do all you could?"

The small, coarse features of Mr. Job grew blank with a curious sort of disappointment: "Is that all?" said he. "No" unless I were well paid for my pains in his behalf, he might go to Botany Bay, for all I care."

"What!" I cried, in a tone of reproach, "is this your friendship? I thought, just now, that you said Dawson had been an old and firm associate of yours."

"An old one, your honour; but not a firm one. A short time ago, I was in great distress, and he and Thorn-

ton had, deuce knows how! about two thousand between them; but I could not worm a stiver out of Dawson—that gripe-all, Thornton, got it all from him."

"Two thousand pounds!" said I, in a calm voice, though my heart beat violently; "that's a great sum for a poor fellow like Dawson. How long ago is it since he had it?"

"About two or three months," answered Jonson.

"Pray," I asked, "have you seen much of Dawson lately?"

"I have," replied Jonson.

"Indeed!" said I. "I thought you told me, just now, that you were unacquainted with his residence?"

"So I am," replied Jonson, coldly, "it is not at his own house that I ever see him."

I was silent, for I was now rapidly and minutely weighing the benefits and disadvantages of trusting Jonson as he had desired me to do.

To reduce the question to the simplest form of logic, he had either the power of assisting my investigation, or he had not; if not, neither could he much impede it, and therefore, it mattered little whether he was in my confidence or not; if he *had* the power, the doubt was, whether it would be better for me to benefit by it openly, or by stratagem; that is—whether it were wiser to state the whole case to him, or continue to gain whatever I was able by dint of a blind examination. Now, the disadvantage of candour was, that if it were his wish to screen Dawson and his friend, he would be prepared to do so, and even to put them on their guard against my suspicions; but the indifference he had testified with regard to Dawson seemed to render this probability very small. The benefits of candour were more prominent: Job would then be fully aware that his own safety was not at stake; and should I make it more his interest to

serve the innocent than the guilty, I should have the entire advantage, not only of any actual information he might possess, but of his skill and shrewdness in providing additional proof, or at least suggesting advantageous hints. Moreover, in spite of my vanity and opinion of my own penetration, I could not but confess, that it was unlikely that my cross-examination would be very successful with so old and experienced a sinner as Mr. Jonson. "Set a thief to catch a thief," is among the wisest of wise sayings, and accordingly I resolved in favour of a disclosure.

Drawing my chair close to Jonson's, and fixing my eye upon his countenance, I briefly proceeded to sketch Glanville's situation (only concealing his name), and Thornton's charges. I mentioned my own suspicions of the accuser, and my desire of discovering Dawson, whom Thornton appeared to me artfully to secrete. Lastly, I concluded with a solemn promise, that if my listener could, by any zeal, exertion, knowledge, or contrivance of his own, procure the detection of the men who, I was convinced, were the murderers, a pension of three hundred pounds a year should be immediately settled upon him.

During my communication, the patient Job sat mute and still, fixing his eyes on the ground, and only betraying, by an occasional elevation of the brows, that he took the slightest interest in the tale: when, however, I touched upon the peroration, which so tenderly concluded with the mention of three hundred pounds a year, a visible change came over the countenance of Mr. Jonson. He rubbed his hands with an air of great content, and one sudden smile broke over his features, and almost buried his eyes amid the intricate host of wrinkles it called forth: the smile vanished as rapidly as it came, and Mr. Job turned round to me with a solemn and sedate aspect.

"Well, your honour," said he, "I'm glad you've told me all: we must see what can be done. As for Thornton, I'm afraid we sha'n't make much out of him, for he's an old offender, whose conscience is as hard as a brick-bat; but, of Dawson, I hope better things. However, you must let me go now, for this is a matter that requires a vast deal of private consideration. I shall call upon you to-morrow, sir, before ten o'clock, since you say matters are so pressing; and, I trust, you will then see that you have no reason to repent of the confidence you have placed in a man of honour."

So saying, Mr. Job Jonson emptied the remainder of the bottle into his tumbler, held it up to the light with the *gusto* of a connoisseur, and concluded his potations with a hearty smack of the lips, followed by a long sigh.

"Ah, your honour!" said he, "good wine is a marvellous whetter of the intellect; but your true philosopher is always moderate: for my part, I never exceed my two bottles."

And with these words, this true philosopher took his departure.

No sooner was I freed from his presence, than my thoughts flew to Ellen; I had neither been able to call nor write the whole of the day; and I was painfully fearful, lest my precaution with Sir Reginald's valet had been frustrated, and the alarm of his imprisonment had reached her and Lady Glanville. Harassed by this fear, I disregarded the lateness of the hour, and immediately repaired to Berkeley-square.

Lady and Miss Glanville were alone and at dinner: the servant spoke with his usual unconcern. "They are quite well!" said I, relieved, but still anxious: and the servant replying in the affirmative, I again returned home, and wrote a long, and, I hope, consoling letter to Sir Reginald.

CHAPTER LXXX.

K. Henry. Lord Say, Jack Cade hath sworn to have thy head.

Say. Ay, but I hope your Highness shall have his.—*2nd Part of Henry IV*

PUNCTUAL to his appointment, the next morning came Mr. Job Jonson. I had been on the rack of expectation for the last three hours previous to his arrival, and the warmth of my welcome must have removed any little diffidence with which so shamefaced a gentleman might possibly have been troubled.

At my request, he sat himself down, and seeing that my breakfast things were on the table, remarked what a famous appetite the fresh air always gave him. I took the hint, and pushed the rolls towards him. He immediately fell to work, and, for the next quarter of an hour, his mouth was far too well occupied for the intrusive impertinence of words. At last the things were removed, and Mr. Jonson began.

"I have thought well over the matter, your honour, and I believe we can manage to trounce the rascals—for I agree with you, that there is not a doubt that Thornton and Dawson are the real criminals ; but the affair, sir, is one of the greatest difficulty and importance—nay, of the greatest personal danger. My life may be the forfeit of my desire to serve you—you will not, therefore, be surprised at my accepting your liberal offer of three hundred a year, should I be successful ; although I do assure you, sir, that it was my original intention to reject all recompense, for I am naturally benevolent, and love doing a good action. Indeed, sir, if I were alone in the world, I should scorn any remuneration, for virtue is its own reward ; but a real moralist, your honour, must not

forget his duties on any consideration, and I have a little family to whom my loss would be an irreparable injury ; this, upon my honour, is my only inducement for taking advantage of your generosity ;" and, as the moralist ceased, he took out of his waistcoat pocket a paper, which he handed to me with his usual bow of deference.

I glanced over it—it was a bond, apparently drawn up in all the legal formalities, pledging myself, in case Job Jonson, before the expiration of three days, gave that information which should lead to the detection and punishment of the true murderers of Sir John Tyrrell, deceased, to ensure to the said Job Jonson the yearly annuity of three hundred pounds.

"It is with much pleasure that I shall sign this paper," said I ; "but allow me, *par parenthèse*, to observe, that since you only accept the annuity for the sake of benefiting your little family, in case of your death, this annuity, ceasing with your life, will leave your children as pennyless as at present."

"Pardon me, your honour," rejoined Job, not a whit daunted at the truth of my remark, "*I can insure !*"

"I forgot that," said I signing, and restoring the paper ; "and now to business."

Jonson gravely and carefully looked over the interesting document I returned to him, and carefully lapping it in three envelopes, inserted it in a huge red pocket-book which he thrust into an innermost pocket in his waistcoat.

"Right, sir," said he, slowly; "to business. Before I begin, you must, however, promise me, upon your honour as a gentleman, the strictest secrecy, as to my communications."

I readily agreed to this, so far as that secrecy did not impede my present object; and Job, being content with this condition, resumed.

"You must forgive me, if, in order to arrive at the point in question, I set out from one which may seem to you a little distant."

I nodded my assent, and Job continued.

"I have known Dawson for some years; my acquaintance with him commenced at Newmarket, for I have always had a slight tendency to the turf. He was a wild, foolish fellow, easily led into any mischief, but ever the first to sneak out of it; in short, when he became one of *us*, which his extravagance soon compelled him to do, we considered him as a very serviceable tool, but one who, while he was quite wicked enough to begin a bad action, was much too weak to go through with it; accordingly he was often employed, but never trusted. By the word *us*, which I see has excited your curiosity, I merely mean a body corporate, established furtively and restricted *solely* to exploits on the turf. I think it right to mention this (continued Mr. Jonson aristocratically), because I have the honour to belong to many other societies to which Dawson could never have been admitted. Well, sir, our club was at last broken up, and Dawson was left to shift for himself. His father was still alive, and the young hopeful, having quarrelled with him, was in the greatest distress. He came to me with a pitiful story, and a more pitiful face; so I took compassion upon the poor devil, and procured him, by dint of great interest, admission into a knot of good fellows, whom I visited, by the

way, last night. Here I took him under my especial care; and, as far as I could, with such a dull-headed dromedary, taught him some of the most elegant arts of my profession. However, the ungrateful dog soon stole back to his old courses, and robbed me of half my share of a booty to which I had helped him myself. I hate treachery and ingratitude, your honour; they are so terribly ungentlemanlike!

"I then lost sight of him, till between two and three months ago, when he returned to town and attended our meetings in company with Tom Thornton, who had been chosen a member of the club some months before. Since we had met, Dawson's father had died, and I thought his flash appearance in town arose from his new inheritance. I was mistaken: old Dawson had tied up the property so tightly, that the young one could not scrape enough to pay his debts; accordingly, before he came to town he gave up his life interest in the property to his creditors. However that be, Master Dawson seemed at the top of Fortune's wheel. He kept his horses, and sported the set to champagne and venison: in short, there would have been no end to his extravagance, had not Thornton sucked him like a leech.

"It was about that time that I asked Dawson for a trifle to keep me from gaol: for I was ill in bed, and could not help myself. Will you believe, sir, that the rascal told me to go and be d—d, and Thornton said, amen? I did not forget the ingratitude of my *protégé*, though, when I recovered I appeared entirely to do so. No sooner could I walk about, than I relieved all my necessities. He is but a fool who starves, with all London before him! In proportion as my finances improved, Dawson's visibly decayed. With

them, decreased also his spirits. He became pensive and downcast; never joined any of our parties, and gradually grew quite a useless member of the corporation. To add to his melancholy, he was one morning present at the execution of an unfortunate associate of ours: this made a deep impression upon him; from that moment, he became thoroughly moody and despondent. He was frequently heard talking to himself, could not endure to be left alone in the dark, and began rapidly to pine away.

"One night when he and I were seated together, he asked me if I never repented of my sins, and then added, with a groan, that I had never committed the heinous crime he had. I pressed him to confess, but he would not. However, I coupled that half avowal with his sudden riches, and the mysterious circumstances of Sir John Tyrrell's death; and dark suspicions came into my mind. At that time, and indeed ever since Dawson re-appeared, we were often in the habit of discussing the notorious murder which then engrossed public attention; and as Dawson and Thornton had been witnesses on the inquest, we frequently referred to them respecting it. Dawson always turned pale, and avoided the subject; Thornton, on the contrary, razened it out with his usual impudence. Dawson's aversion to the mention of the murder now came into my remembrance with double weight, to strengthen my suspicions; and, on conversing with one or two of our comrades, I found that my doubts were more than shared, and that Dawson had frequently, when unusually oppressed with his hypochondria, hinted at his committal of some dreadful crime, and at his unceasing remorse for it.

"By degrees, Dawson grew worse and worse—his health decayed, he started at a shadow—drank deeply,

and spoke, in his intoxication, words that made the hairs of our *green men* stand on end.

"‘We must not suffer this,’ said Thornton, whose hardy effrontery enabled him to lord it over the jolly boys, as if he were their chief: ‘his ravings and humbug will unman all our youngsters.’ And so, under this pretence, Thornton had the unhappy man conveyed away to a secret asylum, known only to the chiefs of the gang, and appropriated to the reception of persons who, from the same weakness as Dawson, were likely to endanger others or themselves. There many a poor wretch has been secretly immured, and never suffered to revisit the light of Heaven. The moon’s minions, as well as the monarch’s, must have their state prisoners, and their state victims.

"Well, sir, I shall not detain you much longer. Last night, after your obliging confidence, I repaired to the meeting; Thornton was there, and very much out of humour. When our mess-mates dropped off, and we were alone at one corner of the room, I began talking to him carelessly about his accusation of your friend, who, I have since learnt, is Sir Reginald Glanville—an old friend of mine too; ay, you may look, sir,—but I can stake my life to having picked his pocket one night at the Opera! Thornton was greatly surprised at my early intelligence of a fact hitherto kept so profound a secret; however, I explained it away by a boast of my skill in acquiring information; and he then incautiously let out, that he was exceedingly vexed with himself for the charge he had made against the prisoner, and very uneasy at the urgent inquiries set on foot for Dawson. More and more convinced of his guilt, I quitted the meeting, and went to Dawson’s retreat.

"For fear of his escape, Thornton had had him closely confined in one of

the most secret rooms in the house. His solitude and the darkness of the place, combined with his remorse, had worked upon a mind, never too strong, almost to insanity. He was writhing with the most acute and morbid pangs of conscience that my experience, which has been pretty ample, ever witnessed. The old hag, who is the Hecate (you see, sir, I have had a classical education) of the place, was very loth to admit me to him, for Thornton had bullied her into a great fear of the consequences of disobeying his instructions; but she did not dare to resist my orders. Accordingly I had a long interview with the unfortunate man; he firmly believes that Thornton intends to murder him; and says, that if he could escape from his dungeon, he would surrender himself to the first magistrate he could find.

"I told him that an innocent man had been apprehended for the crime of which I *know* he and Thornton were guilty; and then taking upon myself the office of a preacher, I exhorted him to atone, as far as possible, for his past crime, by a full and faithful confession, that would deliver the innocent and punish the guilty. I held out to him the hope that this confession might perhaps serve the purpose of king's evidence, and obtain him a pardon for his crime; and I promised to use my utmost zeal and diligence to promote his escape from his present den.

"He said, in answer, that he did not wish to live; that he suffered the greatest tortures of mind; and that the only comfort earth held out to him would be to ease his remorse by a full acknowledgment of his crime, and to hope for future mercy by expiating his offence on the scaffold; all this, and much more, to the same purpose, the hen-hearted fellow told me with sighs and groans. I would fain have taken his confession on the spot, and carried it away with me but

he refused to give it to me, or to any one but a parson, whose services he implored me to procure him. I told him, at first, that the thing was impossible; but, moved by his distress and remorse, I promised, at last, to bring one to-night, who should both administer spiritual comfort to him and receive his deposition. My idea at the moment was to disguise *myself* in the dress of the *pater cove*,* and perform the double job:—since then I have thought of a better scheme.

"As my character, you see, your honour, is not so highly prized by the magistrates as it ought to be, any confession made to me might not be of the same value as if it were made to any one else—to a gentleman like you, for instance; and, moreover, it will not do for me to appear in evidence against any of the fraternity; and for two reasons: first, because I have sworn a solemn oath never to do so; and, secondly, because I have a very fair chance of joining Sir John Tyrrell in kingdom come if I do. My present plan, therefore, if it meets your concurrence, would be to introduce your honour as the parson, and for you to receive the confession, which, indeed, you might take down in writing. This plan, I candidly confess, is not without great difficulty, and some danger; for I have not only to impose upon Dawson as a priest, but also upon Brimstone Bess as one of our jolly boys; since I need not tell you that any real parson might knock a long time at her door before it would be opened to him. You must, therefore, be as mum as a mole unless she *cants* to you, and your answers must then be such as I shall dictate; otherwise she may detect you, and, should any of the true men be in the house, we should both come off worse than we went in."

* Gypsy slang—a parson, or minister—but generally applied to a priest of the lowest order.

"My dear Mr. Job," replied I, "there appears to me to be a much easier plan than all this; and that is, simply to tell the Bow-street officers where Dawson may be found, and I think they would be able to carry him away from the arms of Mrs. Brimstone Bess, without any great difficulty or danger."

Jonson smiled.

"I should not long enjoy my annuity, your honour, if were to set the runners upon our best hive. I should be stung to death before the week were out. Even you, should you accompany me to-night, will never know where the spot is situated, nor would you discover it again if you searched all London, with the whole police at your back. Besides, Dawson is not the only person in the house for whom the law is hunting—there are a score others whom I have no desire to give up to the gallows—hid among the odds and ends of the house, as snug as plums in a pudding. Honour forbid that I should betray them—and for nothing, too! No, sir, the only plan I can think of is the one I proposed; if you do not approve of it, (and it certainly is open to exception,) I must devise some other; but that may require delay."

"No, my good Job," replied I, "I am ready to attend you: but could we not manage to release Dawson, as well as take his deposition?—his personal evidence is worth all the written ones in the world."

"Very true," answered Job, "and if it be possible to give Bess the slip we will. However, let us not lose what we may get by grasping at what we may not; let us have the confession first, and we'll try for the release afterwards. I have another reason for this, sir, which, if you knew as much of penitent prigs as I do, you would easily understand. However, it may be explained by the old proverb of 'the devil was sick.' &c. As long

as Dawson is stowed away in a dark hole and fancies devils in every corner, he may be very anxious to make confessions, which, in broad day-light, may not seem to him so desirable. Darkness and solitude are strange stimulants to the conscience, and we may as well not lose any advantage they give us."

"You are an admirable reasoner," cried I, "and I am impatient to accompany you—at what hour shall it be?"

"Not much before midnight," answered Jonson; "but your honour must go back to school and learn lessons before then. Suppose Bess were to address you thus: 'Well, you parish bull prig, are you for lushing jackey, or pattering in the hum box!*' I'll be bound you would not know how to answer."

"I am afraid you are right, Mr. Jonson," said I, in a tone of self humiliation.

"Never mind," replied the compassionate Job, "we are all born ignorant—knowledge is not learnt in a day. A few of the most common and necessary words in our St. Giles's Greek, I shall be able to teach you before night; and I will, beforehand, prepare the old lady for seeing a young hand in the profession. As I must disguise you before we go, and that cannot well be done here, suppose you dine with me at my lodgings."

"I shall be too happy," said I, not a little surprised at the offer.

"I am in Charlotte-street, Bloomsbury, No. —. You must ask for me by the name of Captain De Courey," said Job, with dignity: "and we'll dine at five, in order to have time for your preliminary initiation."

"With all my heart," said I; and Mr. Job Jonson then rose, and, reminding me of my promise of secrecy, took his departure.

* "Well, you parson thief, are you for drinking gin, or talking in the pulpit!"

CHAPTER LXXXI.

Pectus præceptis format amicis.—HOM.

Est quodam prodire tenus, si non datur ultra.—*Ibid.*

WITH all my love of enterprise and adventure, I cannot say that I should have particularly chosen the project before me for my evening's amusement, had I been left solely to my own will; but Glanville's situation forbade me to think of self: and, so far from shrinking at the danger to which I was about to be exposed, I looked forward with the utmost impatience to the hour of rejoining Jonson.

There was yet a long time upon my hands before five o'clock; and the thought of Ellen left me no doubt how it should be passed. I went to Berkeley-square; Lady Glanville rose eagerly when I entered the drawing-room.

"Have you seen Reginald?" said she, "or do you know where he has gone?"

I answered, carelessly, that he had left town for a few days, and, I believed, merely upon a vague excursion, for the benefit of the country air.

"You reassure us," said Lady Glanville; "we have been quite alarmed by Seymour's manner. He appeared so confused when he told us Reginald had left town, that I really thought some accident had happened to him."

I sat myself by Ellen, who appeared wholly occupied in the formation of a purse. While I was whispering into her ear words which brought a thousand blushes to her cheek, Lady Glanville interrupted me, by an exclamation of "have you seen the papers to-day, Mr. Pelham?" and on my reply in the negative, she pointed to an article in the Morning Herald,

which she said had occupied their conjectures all the morning—it ran thus:—

"The evening before last, a person of rank and celebrity was privately carried before the Magistrate at ———. Since then, he has undergone an examination, the nature of which, as well as the name of the individual, is as yet kept a profound secret."

I believe that I have so firm a command over my countenance, that I should not change tint nor muscle, to hear of the greatest calamity that could happen to me. I did not therefore betray a single one of the emotions this paragraph excited within me but appeared, on the contrary, as much at a loss as Lady Glanville, and wondered and guessed with her, till she remembered my present situation in the family, and left me alone with Ellen.

Why should the *tête-à-tête* of lovers be so uninteresting to the world, when there is scarcely a being in it who has not loved? The expressions of every other feeling come home to us all—the expressions of love weary and fatigue us. But the interview of that morning was far from resembling those delicious meetings which the history of love at that early period of its existence so often delineates. I could not give myself up to happiness which a moment might destroy; and though I veiled my anxiety and coldness from Ellen, I felt it as a crime to indulge even the appearance of transport, while Glanville lay alone

and in prison, with the charge of murder yet uncontroverted, and the chances of its doom undiminished.

The clock had struck four before I left Ellen, and without returning to my hotel, I threw myself into a hackney-coach, and drove to Charlotte-street. The worthy Job received me with his wonted dignity and ease; his lodgings consisted of a first floor, furnished according to all the notions of Bloomsbury elegance—viz., new, glaring Brussels carpeting; convex mirrors, with massy gilt frames, and eagles at the summit; rosewood chairs, with chintz cushions; bright grates, with a flower-pot, cut out of yellow paper, in each; in short, all that especial neatness of upholstering paraphernalia, which Vincent used, not inaptly, to designate by the title of "the tea-chest taste." Jonson seemed not a little proud of his apartments—accordingly, I complimented him upon their elegance.

"Under the rose be it spoken," said he, "the landlady, who is a widow, believes me to be an officer on half-pay, and thinks I wish to marry her; poor woman! my black locks and green coat have a witchery that surprises even me: who would be a slovenly thief, when there are such advantages in being a smart one?"

"Right, Mr. Jonson?" said I; "but shall I own to you that I am surprised that a gentleman of your talents should stoop to the lower arts of the profession. I always imagined that pocket-picking was a part of your business left only to the plebeian purloiner; now I know, to my cost, that you do not disdain that manual accomplishment."

"Your honour speaks like a judge," answered Job; "the fact is, that I *should* despise what you rightly designate 'the lower arts of the profession,' if I did not value myself upon giving them a charm, and investing them with a dignity, never bestowed

upon them before. To give you an idea of the superior dexterity with which I manage my sleight of hand, know, that four times I have been in that shop where you saw me *borrow* the diamond ring, which you now remark upon my little finger; and four times have I brought back some token of my visitations; nay, the shopman is so far from suspecting me, that he has twice favoured me with the piteous tale of the very losses I myself brought upon him; and I make no doubt that I shall hear, in a few days, the whole history of the departed diamond, now in my keeping, coupled with that of *your honour's* appearance and custom! Allow that it would be a pity to suffer pride to stand in the way of the talents with which Providence has blest me; to scorn the little *delicacies* of art, which I execute so well, would, in my opinion, be as absurd as for an epic poet to disdain the composition of a perfect epigram, or a consummate musician the melody of a faultless song."

"Bravo! Mr. Job," said I; "a truly great man, you see, can confer honour upon trifles." More I might have said, but was stopped short by the entrance of the landlady, who was a fine, fair, well-dressed, comely woman, of about thirty-nine years and eleven months; or, to speak less precisely, *between thirty and forty*. She came to announce that dinner was served below. We descended, and found a sumptuous repast of roast beef and fish; this primary course was succeeded by that great dainty with common people—a duck and green peas.

"Upon my word, Mr. Jonson," said I, "you fare like a prince; your weekly expenditure must be pretty considerable for a single gentleman."

"I don't know," answered Jonson, with an air of lordly indifference—"I have never paid my good hostess any coin but compliments, and in all probability never shall."

Was there ever a better illustration of Moore's admonition—

'O, ladies, beware of a gay young knight,' &c.

After dinner we remounted to the apartments Job emphatically called *his own*; and he then proceeded to initiate me in those phrases of the noble language of "Flash," which might best serve my necessities on the approaching occasion. The slang part of my Cambridge education had made me acquainted with some little elementary knowledge, which rendered Jonson's precepts less strange and abstruse. In this lecture "sweet and holy," the hours passed away till it became time for me to dress. Mr. Jonson then took me into the penetralia of his bed-room. I stumbled against an enormous trunk. On hearing the involuntary anathema which this accident conjured up to my lips, Jonson said—"Ah, sir!—do oblige me by trying to move that box."

I did so, but could not stir it an inch.

"Your honour never saw a *jewel box* so heavy before, I think," said Jonson, with a smile.

"A jewel box!"

"Yes," returned Jonson—"a jewel box, for it is full of *precious stones*! When I go away—not a little in my good landlady's books—I shall desire her, very importantly, to take the greatest care of '*my box*.' Egad! it would be a treasure to MacAdam; he might pound its flinty contents into a street."

With these words, Mr. Jonson unlocked a wardrobe in the room, and produced a full suit of rusty black.

"There!" said he with an air of satisfaction—"there! this will be your first step to the pulpit."

I doffed my own attire, and with "some natural sighs," at the deformity of my approaching metamorphosis, I slowly induced myself in the clerical garments; they were much

too wide, and a little too short for me; but Jonson turned me round, as if I were his eldest son, breeched for the first time—and declared with an emphatical oath, that the clothes fitted me to a hair.

My host next opened a tin dressing-box, of large dimensions, from which he took sundry powders, lotions, and paints. Nothing but my extreme friendship for Glanville could ever have supported me through the operation I then underwent. My poor complexion, thought I, with tears in my eyes, it is ruined for ever! To crown all—Jonson robbed me, by four clips of his scissors, of the luxuriant locks which, from the pampered indulgence so long accorded to them, might have rebelled against the new dynasty which Jonson now elected to *the crown*. This dynasty consisted of a shaggy, but admirably made wig, of a sandy colour. When I was thus completely attired from head to foot, Job displayed me to myself before a full length looking-glass.

Had I gazed at the reflection for ever, I should not have recognised either my form or visage. I thought my soul had undergone a real transmigration, and not carried to its new body a particle of the original one. What appeared the most singular was, that I did not seem even to myself at all a ridiculous or *outré* figure; so admirably had the skill of Mr. Jonson been employed. I overwhelmed him with encomiums, which he took *au pied de la lettre*. Never, indeed, was there a man so vain of being a rogue.

"But," said I, "why this disguise? Your friends will, probably, be well versed enough in the mysteries of metamorphosis, to see even through your arts; and, as they have never beheld me before, it would very little matter if I went in *propiâ personâ*."

"True," answered Job, "but you don't reflect that without disguise you may hereafter be recognised; our

friends walk in Bond-street as well as your honour; and, in that case, you might be shot without a second, as the saying is."

"You have convinced me," said I; "and now, before we start, let me say one word further respecting our *object*. I tell you, fairly, that I think Dawson's written deposition but a secondary point: and for this reason, should it not be supported by any *circumstantial* or *local* evidence, hereafter to be ascertained, it may be quite insufficient fully to acquit Glanville (in spite of all appearances), and criminate the real murderers. If, therefore, it be *possible* to carry off Dawson, *after* having secured his confession, we must. I think it right to insist more particularly on this point, as you appeared to me rather averse to it this morning."

"I say ditto to your honour," returned Job; "and you may be sure that I shall do all in my power to effect your object, not only from that love of virtue which is implanted in my mind, when no stronger inducement leads me astray, but from the more worldly reminiscence, that the

annuity we have agreed upon is only to be given in case of *success*—not merely for *well-meaning attempts*. To say that I have no objection to the release of Dawson, would be to deceive your honour; I own that I have; and the objection is, first, my fear lest he should *perach* respecting other affairs besides the murder of Sir John Tyrrell; and, secondly, my scruples as to *appearing* to interfere with his escape. Both of these chances expose me to great danger; however, one does not get three hundred a-year for washing one's hands, and I must balance the one against the other."

"You are a sensible man, Mr. Job," said I, "and I am sure you will richly earn, and long enjoy your annuity."

As I said this, the watchman beneath our window, called "past eleven!" and Jonson, starting up, hastily changed his own gay gear for a more simple dress, and throwing over all a Scotch plaid, gave me a similar one, in which I closely wrapped myself. We descended the stairs softly, and Jonson *let us out* into the street, by the "open sesame" of a key, which he retained about his person.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

Et cantare pares, et respondere parati.—VIRGIL.

As we walked on into Tottenham-court-road, where we expected to find a hackney-coach, my companion earnestly and strenuously impressed on my mind, the necessity of implicitly obeying any instructions or hints he might give me in the course of our adventure. "Remember," said he, forcibly, "that the least deviation from them, will not only defeat our object of removing Dawson, but even expose our lives to the most imminent peril." I faithfully promised to conform to the minutest tittle of his instructions.

We came to a stand of coaches. Jonson selected one, and gave the coachman an order; he took care it should not reach my ears. During the half-hour we passed in this vehicle, Job examined and re-examined me in my "canting catechism," as he termed it. He expressed himself much pleased with the quickness of my parts, and honoured me with an assurance that in less than three months he would engage to make me as complete a ruffler as *ever nailed a swell*.

To this gratifying compliment I made the best return in my power.

"You must not suppose," said Jonson—some minutes afterwards, "from our use of this language, that our club consists of the lower order of thieves—quite the contrary; we are a knot of gentlemen adventurers who wear the best clothes, ride the best hacks, frequent the best gaming-houses as well as the *genteel* haunts, and sometimes keep the *first company*—in London. We are limited in number: we have nothing in common with ordinary prigs, and should my own little private amusements (as you appropriately term them) be known in the set, I should have a very fair chance of being expelled for *ungentlemanlike* practices. We rarely condescend to speak "flash" to each other in our ordinary meetings, but we find it necessary for many shifts to which fortune sometimes drives us. The house you are going this night to visit, is a sort of colony we have established for whatever persons amongst us are in danger of blood-money.* There they sometimes lie concealed for weeks together, and are at last shipped off for the continent, or enter the world under a new alias. To this refuge of the distressed we also send any of the mess, who, like Dawson, are troubled with qualms of conscience, which are likely to endanger the commonwealth: there they remain, as in a hospital, till death, or a cure; in short, we put the house, like its inmates, to any purposes likely to frustrate our enemies, and serve ourselves. Old Brimstone Bess, to whom I shall introduce you, is, as I before said, the guardian of the place; and the language that respectable lady chiefly indulges in, is the one into which you have just acquired so good an insight. Partly in compliment

to her, and partly from inclination, the dialect adopted in her house is almost entirely "flash!" and you, therefore, perceive the necessity of appearing not utterly ignorant of a tongue, which is not only the language of the country, but one with which no true boy, however high in his profession, is ever unacquainted."

By the time Jonson had finished this speech, the coach stopped—I looked eagerly out of the window—Jonson observed the motion: "We have not got half-way yet, your honour," said he. We left the coach, which Jonson requested me to pay, and walked on.

"Tell me frankly, sir," said Job, "do you know where you are?"

"Not in the least," replied I, looking wistfully up a long, dull, ill-lighted street.

Job rolled his sinister eye towards me with a searching look, and then turning abruptly to the right, penetrated into a sort of covered lane, or court, which terminated in an alley, that brought us suddenly to a stand of three coaches; one of these Job hailed—we entered it—a secret direction was given, and we drove furiously on, faster than I should think the crazy body of hackney chariot ever drove before. I observed, that we had now entered a part of the town, which was singularly strange to me; the houses were old, and for the most part of the meanest description; we appeared to me to be threading a labyrinth of alleys; once, I imagined that I caught, through a sudden opening, a glimpse of the river, but we passed so rapidly, that my eye might have deceived me. At length we stopped: the coachman was again dismissed, and I again walked onwards, under the guidance, and almost at the mercy of my honest companion.

Jonson did not address me—he was silent and absorbed, and I had therefore full leisure to consider my present

* Rewards for the apprehension of thieves, &c.

situation. Though (thanks to my physical constitution) I am as callous to fear as most men, a few chilling apprehensions certainly flitted across my mind, when I looked round at the dim and dreary sheds—houses they were not—which were on either side of our path; only, here and there, a single lamp shed a sickly light upon the dismal and intersecting lanes (though lane is too lofty a word), through which our footsteps woke a solitary sound. Sometimes this feeble light was altogether withheld, and I could scarcely catch even the outline of my companion's muscular frame. However, he strode on through the darkness, with the mechanical rapidity of one to whom every stone is familiar. I listened eagerly for the sound of the watchman's voice;—in vain—that note was never heard in those desolate recesses. My ear drank in nothing but the sound of our own footsteps, or the occasional burst of obscene and unholy merriment from some half-closed hovel, where Infamy and Vice were holding revels. Now and then, a wretched thing, in the vilest extreme of want, and loathsomeness, and rags, loitered by the unfrequent lamps, and interrupted our progress with solicitations, which made my blood run cold. By degrees even these tokens of life ceased—the last lamp was entirely shut from our view—we were in utter darkness.

"We are near our journey's end now," whispered Jonson.

At these words a thousand unwelcome reflections forced themselves involuntarily on my mind: I was about to plunge into the most secret retreat of men whom long habits of villany and desperate abandonment, had hardened into a nature which had scarcely a sympathy with my own; unarmed and defenceless, I was about to penetrate a concealment upon which their lives perhaps depended; what could I anticipate from their vengeance, but

the sure hand and the deadly knife, which their self-preservation would more than justify to such lawless reasoners? And who was my companion? One who literally gloried in the perfection of his nefarious practices; and who, if he had stopped short of the worst enormities, seemed neither to disown the principle upon which they were committed, nor to balance for a moment between his interest and his conscience.

Nor did he attempt to conceal from me the danger to which I was exposed; much as his daring habits of life, and the good fortune which had attended him, must have hardened his nerves, even *he* seemed fully sensible of the peril he incurred—a peril certainly considerably less than that which attended *my* temerity. Bitterly did I repent, as these reflections rapidly passed my mind, my negligence in not providing myself with a single weapon in ease of need; the worst pang of death is the falling without a struggle.

However, it was no moment for the indulgence of fear, it was rather one of those eventful periods which so rarely occur in the monotony of common life, when our minds are sounded to their utmost depths: and energies, of which we dreamt not when at rest in their secret retreats, arise like spirits at the summons of the wizard, and bring to the invoking mind an unlooked for and preternatural aid.

There was something too in the disposition of my guide, which gave me a confidence in him, not warranted by the occupations of his life; an easy and frank boldness, an ingenuous vanity of abilities, skilfully, though dishonestly exerted, which had nothing of the meanness and mystery of an ordinary villain, and which being equally prominent with the rascality they adorned, prevented the attention from dwelling upon the darker shades of his character. Besides, I had so

closely entwined his interest with my own, that I felt there could be no possible ground either for suspecting him of any deceit towards me, or of omitting any art or exertion which could conduce to our mutual safety, or our common end.

Forcing myself to dwell solely upon the more encouraging side of the enterprise I had undertaken, I continued to move on with my worthy comrade, silent and in darkness, for some minutes longer—Jonson then halted.

"Are you quite prepared, sir?" said he, in a whisper: "if your heart fails, in Heaven's name let us turn back: the least evident terror will be as much as your life is worth."

My thoughts were upon Reginald and Ellen, as I replied—

"You have told and *convinced* me that I may trust in you, and I have no fears; my present object is one as strong to me as life."

"I would we had a *glim*," rejoined Job, musingly; "I should like to see your face; but will you give me your hand, sir?"

I did, and Jonson held it in his own for more than a minute.

"Fore Gad, sir," said he at last, "I would you were one of us. You would live a brave man, and die a game one. Your pulse is like iron; and your hand does not sway—no—not so much as to wave a dove's feather: it would be a burning shame if harm came to so stout a heart." Job moved on a few steps. "Now, sir," he whispered, "remember your flash; do exactly as I may have occasion to tell you; and be sure to sit away from the light, should we be in company."

With these words he stopped. By the touch (for it was too dark to see,) I felt that he was bending down, apparently in a listening attitude; presently he tapped five times at what I supposed was the door, though I afterwards discovered it was the shutter to a window upon this, a faint light

broke through the crevices of the boards, and a low voice uttered some sound, which my ear did not catch. Job replied in the same key, and in words which were perfectly unintelligible to me; the light disappeared: Job moved round, as if turning a corner. I heard the heavy bolts and bars of a door slowly withdraw; and in a few moments, a harsh voice said, in the thieves' dialect—

"Ruffling Job, my prince of prigs, is that you? are you come to the ken alone, or do you carry double?"

"Ah, Bess, my covess, strike me blind if my sees don't tout your bingc muns in spite of the darkmans. Egad, you carry a bene blink aloft. Come to the ken alone—no! my blowen; did not I tell you I should bring a pater cove, to chop up the whiners for Dawson?"*

"Stubble it, you ben, you deserve to cly the jerk for your patter; come in, and be d—d to you."†

Upon this invitation, Jonson, seizing me by the arm, pushed me into the house, and followed. "Go for a *glim*, Bess, to light in the black 'un with proper respect. I'll close the gig of the crib."

At this order, delivered in an authoritative tone, the old woman, mumbling "strange oaths" to herself, moved away; when she was out of hearing, Job whispered,

"Mark, I shall leave the bolts undrawn; the door opens with a latch, which you press *thus*—do not forget the spring; it is easy, but peculiar; should you be forced to run for it, you will also remember, above all, when you are out of the door, to turn *to the right*, and go straight forwards."

* "Strike me blind if my eyes don't see your brandy face in spite of the night. Come to the house alone—no! my woman; did not I tell you I should bring a parson—to say prayers for Dawson."

† "Hold your tongue, fool, you deserve to be whipped for your chatter."

The old woman now reappeared with a light, and Jonson ceased, and moved hastily towards her: I followed. The old woman asked whether the door had been carefully closed, and Jonson, with an oath at her doubts of such a matter, answered in the affirmative.

We proceeded onwards, through a long and very narrow passage, till Bess opened a small door to the right, and introduced us into a large room, which, to my great dismay, I found already occupied by four men, who were sitting, half immersed in smoke, by an oak table, with a capacious bowl of hot liquor before them. At the back-ground of this room, which resembled the kitchen of a public-house, was an enormous skreen, of antique fashion; a low fire burnt sullenly in the grate, and beside it was one of those high-backed chairs, seen frequently in old houses and old pictures. A clock stood in one corner, and in the opposite nook was a flight of narrow stairs, which led downwards, probably to a cellar. On a row of shelves, were various bottles of the different liquors generally in request among the "flash" gentry, together with an old-fashioned fiddle, two bridles, and some strange looking tools, probably of more use to true boys than to honest men.

Brimstone Bess was a woman about the middle size, but with bones and sinews which would not have disgraced a prize-fighter; a cap, that *might* have been cleaner, was rather *thrown* than *put* on the back of her head, developing, to full advantage, the few scanty locks of grizzled ebon which adorned her countenance. Her eyes, large, black, and prominent, sparkled with a fire half vivacious, half vixen. The nasal feature was broad and *fungous*, and, as well as the whole of her capacious physiognomy, blushed with the deepest scarlet: it was evident to see that many a full bottle

of "British compounds" had contributed to the feeding of that burning and phosphoric illumination which was, indeed, "the outward and visible sign of an inward and *spiritual* grace."

The expression of the countenance was not wholly bad. Amidst the deep traces of searing vice and unrestrained passion—amidst all that was bold and unfeminine, and fierce and crafty, there was a latent look of coarse good humour, a twinkle of the eye that bespoke a tendency to mirth and drollery, and an upward curve of the lip that showed, however the human creature might be debased, it still cherished its grand characteristic—the propensity to laughter.

The garb of this dame Leonarda was by no means of that humble nature which one might have supposed. A gown of crimson silk, flounced and furbelowed to the knees, was tastefully relieved by a bright yellow shawl; and a pair of heavy pendants glittered in her ears, which were of the size proper to receive "the big words" they were in the habit of hearing. Probably this finery had its origin in the policy of her guests, who had seen enough of life to know that age, which tames all other passions, never tames the passion of dress in a woman's heart.

No sooner did the four revellers set their eyes upon me than they all rose.

"Zounds, Bess!" cried the tallest of them, "what cull's this? Is this a bousing ken for every cove to shove his trunk in?"

"What ho, my kiddy!" cried Job, "don't be glimflashy: why you'd cry beef on a blater,* the cove is a bob cull, and a pal of my own; and moreover, is as pretty a Tyburn blos-

* "Don't be angry! Why you'd cry beef on a calf—the man is a good fellow, and a comrade of my own," &c.

om as ever was brought up to ride a
rse foaled by an acorn."

Upon this commendatory introduction I was forthwith surrounded, and one of the four proposed that I should be immediately "elected."

This motion, which was probably no gratifying ceremony, Job negatived with a dictatorial air, and reminded his comrades that however they might find it convenient to lower themselves occasionally, yet that they were gentlemen sharpers, and not vulgar cracksmen and clyfakers, and that, therefore, they ought to welcome me with the good breeding appropriate to their station.

Upon this hint, which was received with mingled laughter and deference, (for Job seemed to be a man of might among these Philistines,) the tallest of the set, who bore the euphonious appellation of Spider-shanks, politely asked me if I would "blow a cloud with him!" and upon my assent, (for I thought such an occupation would be the best excuse for silence,) he presented me with a pipe of tobacco, to which dame Brimstone applied a light, and I soon lent my best endeavours to darken still farther the atmosphere around us.

Mr. Job Jonson then began artfully to turn the conversation away from me to the elder confederates of his crew; these were all spoken of under certain singular appellations which might well baffle impertinent curiosity. The name of one was "the Gimlet," another "Crack Crib," a third, "the Magician," a fourth, "Cherry-coloured Jowl." The tallest of the present company was called (as I before said) "Spider-shanks," and the shortest, "Fib Fakescrew;" Job himself was honoured by the *venerabili nomen* of "Guinea Pig." At last Job explained the cause of my appearance; viz., his wish to pacify Dawson's conscience by dressing up one of the pals, whom the sinner could not recognise, as an

"autem bawler," and so obtaining him the benefit of the clergy without endangering the gang by his confession. This detail was received with great good humour, and Job, watching his opportunity, soon after rose, and, turning to me, said—

"Toddle, my bob cull—we must track up the dancers and tout the sinner."*

I wanted no other hint to leave my present situation.

"The ruffian cly thee, Guinea Pig, for stashing the lush,"† said Spider-shanks, helping himself out of the bowl, which was nearly empty.

"Stash the lush!"‡ cried Mrs. Brimstone, "ay, and toddle off to Ruggins. Why, you would not be boosing till lightman's in a square crib like mine, as if you were in a flash panny?"

"That's bang up, mort!" cried Fib. "A square crib, indeed! ay, square as Mr. Newman's court-yard—ding-boys on three sides, and the crap on the fourth!"§

This characteristic witticism was received with great applause; and Jonson, taking a candlestick from the fair fingers of the exasperated Mrs. Brimstone, the hand thus conveniently released immediately transferred itself to Fib's cheeks, with so hearty a concussion that it almost brought the rash jester to the ground. Jonson and I lost not a moment in taking advantage of the confusion this gentle remonstrance appeared to occasion; but instantly left the room and closed the door.

* "Move, my good fellow, we must go up stairs, and look at the sinner."

† "The devil take thee, for stopping the drink."

‡ "Stop the drink, ay, and be off to bed. You would not be drinking till day—in an honest house like mine, as if you were in a disreputable place."

§ "That's capital. A square crib (honest house)! Ay, square as Newgate coach yard—rogues on three sides, and the gallows on the fourth."

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

Tis true that we are in great danger;
The greater, therefore, should our courage be.—SHAKESPEARE.

WE proceeded a short way, when we were stopped by a door; this Job opened, and a narrow staircase, lighted from above by a dim lamp, was before us. We ascended, and found ourselves in a sort of gallery: here hung another lamp, beneath which Job opened a closet.

"This is the place where Bess generally leaves the keys," said he; "we shall find them here, I hope."

So saying, Master Job entered, leaving me in the passage; but soon returned with a disappointed air.

"The old harriidan has left them below," said he; "I must go down for them; your honour will wait here till I return."

Suiting the action to the word, honest Job immediately descended, leaving me alone with my own reflections. Just opposite to the closet was the door of some apartment; I leant accidentally against it; it was only ajar, and gave way; the ordinary consequence in such accidents, is a certain precipitation from the centre of gravity. I am not exempt from the general lot, and accordingly entered the room in a manner entirely contrary to that which my natural inclination would have prompted me to adopt. My ear was accosted by a faint voice, which proceeded from a bed at the opposite corner: it asked, in the thieves' dialect, and in the feeble accents of bodily weakness, who was there? I did not judge it necessary to make any reply, but was withdrawing as gently as possible, when my eye rested upon a table at the foot of the bed, upon which, among two or

three miscellaneous articles, were deposited a brace of pistols, and one of those admirable swords, made according to the modern military regulation, for the united purpose of cut and thrust. The light which enabled me to discover the contents of the room, proceeded from a rush-light placed in the grate; this general symptom of a valetudinarian, together with some other little odd matters (combined with the weak voice of the speaker), impressed me with the idea of having intruded into the chamber of some sick member of the crew. Emboldened by this notion, and by perceiving that the curtains were drawn closely around the bed, so that the inmate could have optical discernment of nothing that occurred without, I could not resist taking two soft steps to the table, and quietly removing a weapon, whose bright face seemed to invite me as a long-known and long-tried friend.

This was not, however, done in so noiseless a manner, but what the voice again addressed me, in a somewhat louder key, by the appellation of "Brimstone Bess," asking, with sundry oaths, "what was the matter?" and requesting something to drink. I need scarcely say that, as before, I made no reply, but crept out of the room as gently as possible, blessing my good fortune for having thrown into my way a weapon with the use of which, above all others, I was acquainted. Scarcely had I regained the passage, before Jonson reappeared with the keys; I showed him my treasure (for indeed it was of no size to conceal).

"Are you mad, sir?" said he, "or

do you think that the best way to avoid suspicion is to walk about with a drawn sword in your hand? I would not have Bess see you for the best diamond I ever *borrowed*." With these words Job took the sword from my reluctant hand.

"Where did you get it?" said he.

I explained in a whisper, and Job, re-opening the door I had so unceremoniously entered, laid the weapon softly *on a chair that stood within reach*. The sick man, whose senses were of course rendered doubly acute by illness, once more demanded in a fretful tone, who was there! And Job replied, in the flash language, that Bess had sent him up to look for her keys, which she imagined she had left there. The invalid rejoined by a request to Jonson to reach him a draught, and we had to undergo a farther delay until his petition was complied with; we then proceeded up the passage till we came to another flight of steps, which led to a door; Job opened it, and we entered a room of no common dimensions.

"This," said he, "is Bess Brimstone's sleeping apartment; whoever goes into the passage that leads not only to Dawson's room, but to the several other chambers occupied by such of the gang as require *particular care*, must pass first through this room. You see that bell by the bedside—I assure you it is no ordinary tinnabulum; it communicates with every sleeping apartment in the house, and is only rung in cases of great alarm, when every boy must look well to himself; there are two more of this description, one in the room which we have just left, another in the one occupied by Spider-shanks, who is our watch-dog, and keeps his kennel below. Those steps in the common room, which seem to lead to a cellar, conduct to his den. As we shall have to come back through this room, you see the difficulty of smuggling Daw-

son—and if the old dame rung the alarm, the whole hive would be out in a moment."

After this speech, Job led me from the room by a door at the opposite end, which showed us a passage, similar in extent and fashion to the one we had left below; at the very extremity of this was the entrance to an apartment at which Jonson stopped.

"Here," said he, taking from his pocket a small paper book and an ink-horn: "here, your honour, take these, you may want to note the heads of Dawson's confession, we are now at his door." Job then applied one of the keys of a tolerably sized bunch to the door, and the next moment we were in Dawson's apartment.

The room which, though low and narrow, was of considerable length, was in utter darkness, and the dim and flickering light which Jonson held, only struggled with, rather than penetrated the thick gloom. About the centre of the room stood the bed, and sitting upright on it, with a wan and hollow countenance, bent eagerly towards us, was a meagre, attenuated figure. My recollection of Dawson, whom, it will be remembered, I had only seen once before, was extremely faint, but it had impressed me with the idea of a middle-sized and rather athletic man, with a fair and florid complexion: the creature I now saw was totally the reverse of this idea. His cheeks were yellow and drawn in; his hand, which was raised in the act of holding aside the curtains, was like the talons of a famished vulture, so thin was it, so long, so withered in its hue and texture.

No sooner did the advancing light allow him to see us distinctly, than he half sprung from the bed, and cried, in that peculiar tone of joy which seems to throw off from the breast a suffocating weight of previous terror and suspense, "Thank God, thank God! it is you at last; and you have

brought the clergyman—God bless you, Jonson, you are a true friend to me.”

“Cheer up, Dawson,” said Job; “I have smuggled in this worthy gentleman, who, I have no doubt, will be of great comfort to you—but you must be open with him, and tell all.”

“That I will—that I will,” cried Dawson, with a wild and vindictive expression of countenance—“if it be only to hang *him*. Here, Jonson, give me your hand, bring the light nearer—I say,—*he*, the devil—the fiend—has been here to-day and threatened to murder me; and I have listened, and listened, all night, and thought I heard his step along the passage, and up the stairs, and at the door; but it was nothing, Job, nothing—and you are come at last, good, kind, worthy Job. Oh; ’tis so horrible to be left in the dark, and not sleep—and in this large, large room, which looks like eternity at night—and one does fancy such sights, Job—such horrid, horrid sights. Feel my wristband, Jonson, and here at my back, you would think they had been pouring water over me, but it’s only the cold sweat. Oh! ’tis a fearful thing to have a bad conscience, Job; but you won’t leave me till daylight, now, that’s a dear, good Job!”

“For shame, Dawson,” said Jonson; “pluck up, and be a man; you are like a baby frightened by its nurse. Here’s the clergyman come to heal your poor wounded conscience, will you hear him *now*?”

“Yes,” said Dawson; “yes!—but go out of the room—I can’t tell all if you’re here; go, Job, go!—but you’re not angry with me—I don’t mean to offend you.”

“Angry!” said Job; “Lord help the poor fellow! no, to be sure not. I’ll stay outside the door, till you’ve done with the clergyman—but make haste, for the night’s almost over, and it’s as much as the parson’s life is worth to stay here after daybreak.”

“I *will* make haste,” said ~~the~~ guilty

man, tremulously; “but Job, where are you going—what are you doing? *leave the light! here, Job, by the bedside.*”

Job did as he was desired, and quitted the room, leaving the door not so firmly shut but that he might hear, if the penitent spoke aloud, every particular of his confession.

I seated myself on the side of the bed, and taking the skeleton hand of the unhappy man, spoke to him in the most consolatory and comforting words I could summon to my assistance. He seemed greatly soothed by my efforts, and at last implored me to let him join me in prayer. I knelt down, and my lips readily found words for that language, which, whatever be the formula of our faith, seems, in all emotions which come home to our hearts, the most natural method of expressing them. It is *here*, by the bed of sickness, or remorse, that the ministers of God have their real power! it is here that their office is indeed a divine and unearthly mission; and that in breathing balm and comfort, in healing the broken heart, in raising the crushed and degraded spirit—they are the voice and oracle of the FATHER, who made us in benevolence, and will judge us in mercy! I rose, and after a short pause, Dawson, who expressed himself impatient for the comfort of confession, thus began—

“I have no time, sir, to speak of the earlier part of my life. I passed it upon the race-course, and at the gaming-table—all that was, I know, very wrong and wicked; but I was a wild, idle boy, and eager for any thing like enterprise or mischief. Well, sir, it is now more than three years ago since I first met with one Tom Thornton; it was at a boxing match. Tom was chosen chairman, at a sort of club of the farmers and yeomen; and being a lively, amusing fellow, and accustomed to the company of gentlemen, was a great favourite

with all of us. He was very civil to me, and I was quite pleased with his notice. I did not, however, see much of him then, nor for more than two years afterwards; but some months ago we met again. I was in very poor circumstances, so was he, and this made us closer friends than we might otherwise have been. He lived a great deal at the gambling-houses, and fancied he had discovered a certain method of winning * at hazard. So, whenever he could not find a gentleman whom he could cheat with false dice, tricks at cards, &c., he would go into any hell to try his infallible game. I did not, however, perceive that he made a good living by it: and though sometimes, either by that method or some other, he had large sums of money in his possession, yet they were spent as soon as acquired. The fact was, that he was not a man that could ever grow rich; he was extremely extravagant in all things — loved women and drinking, and was always striving to get into the society of people above him. In order to do this, he affected great carelessness of money; and if, at a race or a cock-fight, any real gentlemen would go home with him, he would insist upon treating them to the best of everything.

“Thus, sir, he was always poor, and at his wit's end for means to supply his extravagance. He introduced me to three or four *gentlemen*, as he called them, but whom I have since found to be markers, sharpers, and black-legs; and this set soon dissipated the little honesty my own habits of life had left me. They never spoke of things by their right names; and, therefore, those things never seemed so bad as they really were—to swindle a gentleman did not sound a crime when it was called ‘macing a swell,’ — nor transportation a punishment,

when it was termed, with a laugh, ‘lagging a cove.’ Thus, insensibly, my ideas of right and wrong, always obscure, became perfectly confused: and the habit of treating all crimes as subjects of jest in familiar conversation, soon made me regard them as matters of very trifling importance.

“Well, sir, at Newmarket races, this Spring meeting, Thornton and I were on the *look out*. He had come down to stay, during the races, at a house I had just inherited from my father, but which was rather an expense to me than an advantage; especially as my wife, who was an inn-keeper's daughter, was very careless and extravagant. It so happened that we were both taken in by a jockey, whom we had bribed very largely, and were losers to a very considerable amount. Among other people, I lost to a Sir John Tyrrell. I expressed my vexation to Thornton, who told me not to mind it, but to tell Sir John that I would pay him if he came to the town; and that he was quite sure we could win enough, by his certain game at hazard, to pay off my debt. He was so very urgent, that I allowed myself to be persuaded; though Thornton has since told me, that his only motive was to prevent Sir John's going to the Marquess of Chester's (where he was invited) with my lord's party; and so to have an opportunity of accomplishing the crime he then meditated.

“Accordingly, as Thornton desired, I asked Sir John Tyrrell to come with me to Newmarket. He did so. I left him, joined Thornton, and went to the gambling-house. Here we were engaged in Thornton's sure game, when Sir John entered. I went up and apologised for not paying, and said I would pay him in three months. However, Sir John was very angry, and treated me with such rudeness, that the whole table remarked it. When he was gone, I told Thornton how hurt and indignant I was at Sir

* A very common delusion, both among sharpers and their prey.

John's treatment. He incensed me still more—exaggerated Sir John's conduct—said that I had suffered the grossest insult; and at last put me into such a passion, that I said, that if I was a gentleman, I would fight Sir John Tyrrell across the table.

"When Thornton saw I was so moved, he took me out of the room, and carried me to an inn. Here he ordered dinner, and several bottles of wine. I never could bear much drink: he knew this, and artfully plied me with wine till I scarcely knew what I did or said. He then talked much of our destitute situation—affected to put himself out of the question—said he was a single man, and could easily make shift upon a potato—but that I was encumbered with a wife and child, whom I could not suffer to starve. He then said, that Sir John Tyrrell had publicly disgraced me—that I should be blown upon the course—that no gentleman would bet with me again, and a great deal more of the same sort. Seeing what an effect he had produced upon me, he then told me that he had seen Sir John receive a large sum of money, which would more than pay our debts, and set us up like gentlemen, and, at last, he proposed to me to rob him. Intoxicated as I was, I was somewhat startled at this proposition. However, the slang terms in which Thornton disguised the greatness and danger of the offence, very much diminished both in my eyes—so at length I consented.

"We went to Sir John's inn, and learnt that he had just set out: accordingly we mounted our horses and rode after him. The night had already closed in. After we had got some distance from the main road, into a lane, which led both to my house and to Chester Park—for the former was on the direct way to my lord's—we passed a man on horseback. I only observed that he was wrapped in a cloak—but Thornton said, directly we

had passed him, 'I know that man well—he has been following Tyrrell all day—and though he attempts to screen himself, I have penetrated his disguise:—he is Tyrrell's mortal enemy.'

" 'Should the worst come to the worst,' added Thornton, (words which I did not at that moment understand,) 'we can make *him* bear the blame.'

"When we had got some way further, we came up to Tyrrell and a gentleman, whom, to our great dismay, we found that Sir John had joined—the gentleman's horse had met with an accident, and Thornton dismounted to offer his assistance. He assured the gentleman, who proved afterwards to be a Mr. Pelham that the horse was quite lame, and that he would scarcely be able to get it home; and he then proposed to Sir John to accompany us, and said that we would put him in the right road; this offer Sir John rejected very haughtily, and we rode on.

" 'It's all up with us,' said I; 'since he has joined another person.'

" 'Not at all,' replied Thornton; 'for I managed to give the horse a sly poke with my knife; and if I know any thing of Sir John Tyrrell, he is much too impatient a spark to crawl along, a snail's pace, with any companion, especially with this heavy shower coming on.'

" 'But,' said I, for I now began to recover from my intoxication, and to be sensible of the nature of our undertaking, 'the moon is up, and unless this shower conceals it, Sir John will recognise us; so you see, even if he leave the gentleman, it will be no use, and we had much better make haste home and go to bed.'

"Upon this, Thornton cursed me for a faint-hearted fellow, and said that the cloud would effectually hide the moon—or, if not—he added—'I know how to silence a prating tongue.' At these words I was greatly alarmed, and said, that if he meditated murder as well as robbery, I would have

nothing further to do with it. Thornton laughed, and told me not to be a fool. While we were thus debating, a heavy shower came on; we rode hastily to a large tree, by the side of a pond—which, though bare and withered, was the nearest shelter the country afforded, and was only a very short distance from my house. I wished to go home—but Thornton would not let me, and as I was always in the habit of yielding, I remained with him, though very reluctantly, under the tree.

"Presently, we heard the trampling of a horse.

" 'It is he—it is he,' cried Thornton with a savage tone of exultation—'and alone!—Be ready—we must make a rush—I will be the one to bid him to deliver—you hold your tongue.'

"The clouds and rain had so overcast the night, that, although it was not *perfectly dark*, it was sufficiently obscure to screen our countenances. Just as Tyrrell approached Thornton dashed forward, and cried, in a feigned voice—'Stand, on your peril!' I followed, and we were now both by Sir John's side.

"He attempted to push by us—but Thornton seized him by the arm—there was a stout struggle, in which, as yet, I had no share; at last, Tyrrell got loose from Thornton, and I seized him—he set spurs to his horse, which was a very spirited and strong animal—it reared upwards, and very nearly brought me and my horse to the ground—at that instant, Thornton struck the unfortunate man a violent blow across the head with the butt-end of his heavy whip—Sir John's hat had fallen before in the struggle, and the blow was so stunning that it felled him upon the spot. Thornton dismounted, and made me do the same—'There is no time to lose,' said he; 'let us drag him from the roadside, and rifle him.' We accordingly

carried him (he was still senseless) to the side of the pond before mentioned. While we were searching for the money Thornton spoke of, the storm ceased, and the moon broke out—we were detained some moments by the accident of Tyrrell's having transferred his pocket-book from the pocket Thornton had seen him put in on the race-ground to an inner one.

"We had just discovered, and seized the pocket-book, when Sir John awoke from his swoon, and his eyes opened upon Thornton, who was still bending over him, and looking at the contents of the book to see that all was right; the moonlight left Tyrrell in no doubt as to our persons; and struggling hard to get up, he cried, 'I know you! I know you! you shall hang for this.' No sooner had he uttered this imprudence, than it was all over with him. 'We will see that, Sir John,' said Thornton, setting his knee upon Tyrrell's chest, and nailing him down. While thus employed, he told me to feel in his coat-pocket for a case-knife.

" 'For God's sake,' cried Tyrrell, with a tone of agonising terror which haunts me still, 'spare my life!'

" 'It is too late,' said Thornton, deliberately, and taking the knife from my hands, he plunged it into Sir John's side, and as the blade was too short to reach the vitals, Thornton drew it backwards and forwards to widen the wound. Tyrrell was a strong man, and still continued to struggle and call out for mercy—Thornton drew out the knife—Tyrrell seized it by the blade, and his fingers were cut through before Thornton could snatch it from his grasp; the wretched gentleman then saw all hope was over; he uttered one loud, sharp cry of despair. Thornton put one hand to his mouth, and with the other gashed his throat from ear to ear.

" 'You have done for him and for us now,' said I, as Thornton slowly

rose from the body. 'No,' replied he, 'look, he still moves;' and sure enough he did, but it was in the last agony. However, Thornton, to make all sure, plunged the knife again into his body: the blade came in contact with a bone, and snapped in two: so great was the violence of the blow, that, instead of remaining in the flesh, the broken piece fell upon the ground among the long fern and grass.

"While we were employed in searching for it, Thornton, whose ears were much sharper than mine, caught the sound of a horse. 'Mount! mount!' he cried, 'and let us be off!' We sprung upon our horses, and rode away as fast as we could. I wished to go home, as it was so near at hand; but Thornton insisted on making to an old shed, about a quarter of a mile across the fields: thither, therefore, we went."

"Stop," said I: "what did Thornton do with the remaining part of the case-knife? Did he throw it away, or carry it with him?"

"He took it with him," answered Dawson, "for his name was engraved on a silver plate on the handle; and he was therefore afraid of throwing it into the pond, as I advised, lest at any time it should be discovered. Close by the shed there is a plantation of young firs of some extent: Thornton and I entered, and he dug a hole with the broken blade of the knife, and buried it, covering up the hole again with the earth."

"Describe the place," said I. Dawson paused, and seemed to recollect. I was on the very tenterhooks of suspense, for I saw with one glance all the importance of his reply.

After some moments, he shook his head: "*I cannot* describe the place," said he, "for the wood is so thick; yet I know the exact spot so well, that, were I in any part of the plantation, I could point it out immediately."

I told him to pause again, and recollect himself; and at all events, *to try* to indicate the place. However, his account was so confused and perplexed, that I was forced to give up the point in despair, and he continued.

"After we had done this, Thornton told me to hold the horses, and said he would go alone, to spy whether we might return; accordingly he did so, and brought back word, in about half an hour, that he had crept cautiously along till in sight of the place, and then, throwing himself down on his face by the ridge of a bank, had observed a man (who he was sure was the person with a cloak we had passed, and who, he said, was Sir Reginald Glanville) mount his horse on the very spot of the murder, and ride off, while another person (Mr. Pelham) appeared, and also discovered the fatal place.

"'There is no doubt now,' said he, 'that we shall have the hue-and-cry upon us. However, if you are staunch and stout-hearted, no possible danger can come to us; for you may leave me alone to throw the whole guilt upon Sir Reginald Glanville.'

"We then mounted, and rode home. We stole up stairs by the back way. Thornton's linen and hands were stained with blood. The former he took off, locked up carefully, and burnt the first opportunity: the latter he washed; and, that the water might not lead to detection, *drank it*. We then appeared as if nothing had occurred, and learnt that Mr. Pelham had been to the house; but as, very fortunately, our out-buildings had been lately robbed by some idle people, my wife and servants had refused to admit him. I was thrown into great agitation, and was extremely frightened. However, as Mr. Pelham had left a message that we were to go to the pond, Thornton insisted upon our remaining there 'to avoid suspicion.'"

Dawson then proceeded to say, that, on their return, as he was still exceedingly nervous, Thornton insisted on his going to bed. When our party from Lord Chester's came to the house, Thornton went into Dawson's room, and made him swallow a large tumbler of brandy;* this intoxicated him so as to make him less sensible to his dangerous situation. Afterwards, when the picture was found, which circumstance Thornton communicated to him, along with that of the threatening letter sent by Glanville to the deceased, which was discovered in Tyrrell's pocket book, Dawson recovered courage, and justice being entirely thrown on a wrong scent, he managed to pass his examination without suspicion. He then went to town with Thornton, and constantly attended "the club" to which Jonson had before introduced him; at first, among his new comrades, and while the novel flush of the money he had so fearfully acquired, lasted, he partially succeeded in stifling his remorse. But the success of crime is too contrary to nature to continue long; his poor wife, whom, in spite of *her* extravagant, and *his* dissolute habits, he seemed really to love, fell ill, and died; on her death-bed she revealed the suspicions she had formed of his crime, and said that those suspicions had preyed upon, and finally destroyed her health: this awoke him from the guilty torpor of his conscience. His share of the money, too, the greater part of which Thornton had bullied out of him, was gone. He fell, as Job had said, into despondency and gloom, and often spoke to Thornton so forcibly of his remorse, and so earnestly of his gnawing and restless desire to appease his mind, by surrendering himself to justice, that the fears of that villain grew, at length, so thoroughly alarmed, as

to procure his removal to his present abode.

It was here that his real punishment commenced; closely confined to his apartment, at the remotest corner of the house, his solitude was never broken but by the short and hurried visits of his female gaoler, and (worse even than loneliness) the occasional invasions of Thornton. There appeared to be in that abandoned wretch, what, for the honour of human nature, is but rarely found, viz. a love of sin, not for its objects, but itself. With a malignity, doubly fiendish from its inutility, he forbade Dawson the only indulgence he craved—a light during the dark hours; and not only insulted him for his cowardice, but even added to his terrors by threats of effectually silencing them.

These fears had so wildly worked upon the man's mind, that prison itself appeared to him an elysium to the hell he endured: and when his confession was ended, and I said, "If you can be freed from this place, would you repeat before a magistrate all that you have now told me?" he started up in delight at the very thought. In truth, besides his remorse, and that inward and impelling voice which, in all the annals of murder, seems to urge the criminal onwards to the last expiation of his guilt—besides these, there mingled in his mind a sentiment of bitter, yet cowardly, vengeance, against his inhuman accomplice; and perhaps he found consolation for his own fate, in the hope of wreaking upon Thornton's head somewhat of the tortures that ruffian had inflicted upon him.

I had taken down in my book the heads of the confession, and I now hastened to Jonson, who, waiting without the door, had (as I had anticipated) heard all.

"You see," said I, "that, however satisfactory this recital has been, it contains no secondary or innate proofs

* A common practice with thieves who fear the weak nerves of their accomplices.

to confirm it; the only evidence with which it could furnish us, would be the remnant of the broken knife, engraved with Thornton's name; but you have heard from Dawson's account, how impossible it would be in an extensive wood, for any one to discover the spot but himself. You will agree with me, therefore, that we must not leave this house without Dawson."

Job changed colour slightly.

"I see as clearly as you do," said he, "that it will be necessary for my annuity, and your friend's full acquittal, to procure Dawson's personal evidence, but it is late now; the men may be still drinking below; Bess may be still awake and stirring; even if she sleeps, how could we pass her room without disturbing her! I own that I do not see a chance of effecting his escape to-night, without incurring the most probable peril of having our throats cut. Leave it, therefore to me to procure his release as soon as possible—probably to-morrow, and let us now quietly retire, content with what we have yet got."

Hitherto I had implicitly obeyed Job: it was now *my* turn to command. "Look you," said I, calmly but sternly, "I have come into this house under your guidance, solely to procure the evidence of that man; the evidence he has, as yet, given may not be worth a straw; and, since I have ventured among the knives of your associates, it shall be for some purpose. I tell you fairly that, whether you befriend or betray me, I will either leave these walls with Dawson, or remain in them a corpse."

"You are a bold blade, sir," said Jonson, who seemed rather to respect than resent the determination of my tone, "and we will see what can be done; wait here, your honour, while I go down to see if the boys are gone to bed, and the coast is clear."

Job descended, and I re-entered Dawson's room. When I told him

that we were resolved, if possible, to effect his escape, nothing could exceed his transport and gratitude; this was indeed, expressed in so mean and servile a manner, mixed with so many petty threats of vengeance against Thornton, that I could scarcely conceal my disgust.

Jonson returned, and beckoned me out of the room.

"They are all in bed, sir," said he — "Bess as well as the rest; indeed, the old girl has lushed so well at the bingo, that she sleeps as if her next morrow was the day of judgment. I have, also, seen that the street-door is still unbarred, so that, upon the whole, we have, perhaps, as good a chance to-night as we may ever have again. All my fear is about that cowardly lubber. I have left both Bess's doors wide open, so we have nothing to do but to creep through; as for me, I am an old file, and could steal my way through a sick man's room, like a sunbeam through a key-hole."

"Well," said I, in the same strain, "I am no elephant, and my dancing master used to tell me I might tread on a butterfly's wing without brushing off a tint: (poor Coulon! he little thought of the use his lessons would be to me hereafter!—) so let us be quick, Master Job."

"Stop," said Jonson; "I have yet a ceremony to perform with our caged bird. I must put a fresh gag on his mouth; for though, if he escapes, I must leave England, perhaps for ever, for fear of the jolly boys, and, therefore, care not what he blabs about me; yet there are a few fine fellows amongst the club, whom I would not have hurt for the Indies; so I shall make Master Dawson take *our last oath*—the Devil himself would not break that, I think! Your honour will stay outside the door, for we can have no witness while it is administered."

Job then entered; I stood without

—in a few minutes I heard Dawson's voice in the accents of supplication. Soon after Job returned. "The craven dog won't take the oath," said he, "and may my right hand rot above ground before it shall turn key for him unless he does." But when Dawson saw that Job had left the room, and withdrawn the light, the conscience-stricken coward came to the door, and implored Job to return. "Will you swear, then?" said Jonson; "I will, I will," was the answer.

Job then re-entered—minutes passed away—Job re-appeared, and Dawson was dressed, and clinging hold of him—"Ail's right!" said he to me, with a satisfied air.

The oath had been taken—what it was I know not—but *it was never broken*.*

Dawson and Job went first—I followed—we passed the passage, and came to the chamber of the sleeping Mrs. Brimstone. Job bent eagerly forward to listen, before we entered; he took hold of Dawson's arm, and beckoning to me to follow, stole, with a step that the blind mole would not have heard, across the room. Carefully did the practised thief veil the candle he carried with his hand, as he now began to pass by the bed. I saw that Dawson trembled like a leaf, and the palpitation of his limbs made his step audible and heavy. Just as they had half-way passed the bed, I turned my look on Brimstone Bess, and observed with a shuddering thrill, her eyes slowly open, and fix upon the forms of my companions. Dawson's gaze had been bent in the same direction, and when he met the full, glassy stare of the beldame's eyes, he uttered a faint scream. This completed our danger; had it not been for that exclamation, Bess might, in the uncer-

tain vision of drowsiness, have passed over the third person, and fancied it was only myself and Jonson, in our way from Dawson's apartment; but no sooner had her ear caught the sound, than she started up, and sat erect on her bed, gazing at us in mingled wrath and astonishment.

That was a fearful moment—we stood rivetted to the spot! "Oh, my kiddies," cried Bess, at last finding speech, "you are in Querer street, I trow! Plant your stumps, Master Guinea Pig; you are going to stall off the Daw's baby in prime twig, eh! But Bess stags you, my cove! Bess stags you."*

Jonson looked irresolute for one instant; but the next he had decided. "Run, run," cried he, "for your lives," and he and Dawson (to whom fear did indeed lend wings) were out of the room in an instant. I lost no time in following their example; but the vigilant and incensed hag was too quick for me; she pulled violently the bell, on which she had already placed her hand: the alarm rang like an echo in a cavern; below—around—far—near—from wall to wall—from chamber to chamber, the sound seemed multiplied and repeated! and in the same breathing point of time, she sprang from her bed, and seized me, just as I had reached the door.

"On, on, on," cried Jonson's voice to Dawson, as they had already gained the passage, and left the whole room, and the staircase beyond, in utter darkness.

With a firm, muscular, nervous gripe, which almost showed a masculine strength, the hag clung to my throat and breast; behind, among some of the numerous rooms in the passage we had left, I heard sounds, which told too plainly how rapidly the alarm had spread. A door opened—steps ap-

* Those conversant with the annals of Newgate, well know how religiously the oaths of these fearful Freemasonries are kept.

* "Halt,—Master Guinea Pig, you are going to steal Dawson away, eh? But Bess stags you, my man, Bess stags you!"

proached—my fate seemed fixed : but despair gave me energy : it was no time for the ceremonials due to the *beau sere*. I dashed Bess to the ground, tore myself from her relaxing grasp, and fled down the steps with all the precipitation the darkness would allow. I gained the passage, at the far end of which hung the lamp, now weak and waning in its socket, which, it will be remembered, burnt close by the sick man's chamber that I had so unintentionally entered. A thought flashed upon my mind, and lent me new nerves and fresh speed ; I flew along the passage, guided by the dying light. The staircase I had left, shook with the footsteps of my pursuers. I was at the door of the sick thief—I burst it open—seized the sword as it lay within reach on the chair, where Jonson had placed it, and feeling, at the touch of the familiar weapon, as if the might of ten men had been transferred to my single arm, I bounded down the stairs before me—passed the door at the bottom, which Dawson had fortunately left open—flung it back almost upon the face of my advancing enemies, and found myself in the long passage which led to the street-door, in safety, but in the thickest darkness. A light flashed from a door to the left ; the door was that of the "Common room" which we had first entered ; it opened. and Spider-shanks, with one of his comrades, looked forth, the former holding a light. I darted by them, and, guided by their lamp, fled along the passage, and reached the door. Imagine my dismay—when, either through accident, or by the desire of my fugitive companions to impede pursuit, I found it unexpectedly closed !

The two villains had now come up to me ; close at their heels were two more, probably my pursuers from the upper apartments. Providentially

the passage was (as I before said) extremely narrow, and as long as no fire-arms were used, nor a general rush resorted to, I had little doubt of being able to keep the ruffians at bay, until I had hit upon the method of springing the latch, and so winning my escape from the house.

While my left hand was employed in feeling the latch, I made such good use of my right, as to keep my antagonists at a safe distance. The one who was nearest to me, was Fib Fake-screw ; he was armed with a weapon exactly similar to my own. The whole passage rung with oaths and threats. "Crash the cull—down with him—down with him before he dubs the jigger. Tip him the degan, Fib, fake him through and through ; if he pikes, we shall all be scragged."*

Hitherto, in the confusion, I had not been able to recal Job's instructions in opening the latch ; at last I remembered, and pressed the screw—the latch rose—I opened the door ; but not wide enough to escape through the aperture. The ruffians saw my escape at hand. "Rush the b——cove! rush him!" cried the loud voice of one behind ; and, at the word, Fib was thrown forwards upon the extended edge of my blade ; scarcely with an effort of my own arm the sword entered his bosom, and he fell at my feet bathed in blood ; the motion which the men thought would prove my destruction, became my salvation ; staggered by the fall of their companion, they gave way : I seized advantage of the momentary confusion—threw open the door, and, mindful of Job's admonition, *turned to the right*, and fled onwards, with a rapidity which baffled and mocked pursuit.

* "Kill the fellow, down with him before he opens the door. Stab him, through and through ; if he gets off we shall all be hanged."

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

Ille viam secat ad naves sociosque revisit.—VIRGIL.

THE day had already dawned, but all was still and silent; my footsteps smote the solitary pavement with a strange and unanswered sound. Nevertheless, though all pursuit had long ceased, I still continued to run on mechanically, till, faint and breathless, I was forced to pause. I looked round, but could recognise nothing familiar in the narrow and filthy streets; even the names of them were to me like an unknown language. After a brief rest I renewed my wanderings, and at length came to an alley, called River Lane; the name did not deceive me, but brought me, after a short walk to the Thames; there, to my inexpressible joy, I discovered a solitary boatman, and transported myself forthwith to the Whitehall-stairs.

Never, I ween, did gay gallant, in the decaying part of the season, arrive at those stairs for the sweet purpose of accompanying his own mistress, or another's wife to green Richmond, or sunny Hampton, with more eager and animated delight than I felt when rejecting the arm of the rough boatman, and leaping on the well-known stones. I hastened to that stand of 'jarvies' which has often been the rope and shelter of belated member of St. Stephen's, or bewetted fugitive from the Opera—startled a sleeping coachman,—thung myself into his vehicle,—and descended at Mivart's.

The drowsy porter survived, and told me to be gone; I had forgotten, till then, my strange attire. "Pooh, my friend," said I, "may not Mr. Pelham go to a masquerade as well as his betters!" My voice and words undeceived my Cerberus, and I was ad-

mitted; I hastened to bed, and no sooner had I laid my head on my pillow, than I fell fast asleep. It must be confessed, that I had deserved "tired Nature's sweet rest" &c.

I had not been above a couple of hours in the land of dreams, when I was awakened by someone grasping my arm: the events of the past night were so fresh in my memory, that I sprung up, as if the knife was at my throat—my eyes opened upon the peaceful countenance of Mr. Job Jenson.

"Thank Heaven, sir, you are safe! I had but a very faint hope of finding you here when I came."

"Why," said I, rubbing my eyes, "it is very true that I am safe, honest Job: but, I believe, I have few thanks to give *you* for a circumstance so peculiarly agreeable to myself. It would have saved me much trouble, and your worthy friend, Mr. Fib Fakescrew, some pain, if you had left the door open instead of shutting me up with your *club*, as you are pleased to call it!"

"Very true, sir," said Job, "and I am extremely sorry at the accident; it was Dawson who shut the door, through utter unconsciousness, though I told him especially not to do it—the poor dog did not know whether he was on his head or his heels."

"You have got him safe," said I, quickly.

"Ay, trust me for that, your honour. I have locked him up at home while I came here to look for you."

"We will lose no time in transferring him to safer custody," said I, leaping out of bed; "but be off to — Street directly."

"Slow and sure, sir," answered Jonson. "It is for you to do whatever you please, but my part of the business is over. I shall sleep at Dover to-night, and breakfast at Calais to-morrow. Perhaps it will not be very inconvenient to your honour to furnish me with my first quarter's annuity in advance, and to see that the rest is duly paid into Lafitte's, at Paris, for the use of Captain de Courcy. Where I shall live hereafter is at present uncertain; but I dare say there will be few corners except old England and *new* England in which I shall not make merry on your honour's bounty."

"Pooh! my good fellow," rejoined I, "never desert a country to which your talents do such credit; stay here, and reform on your annuity. If ever I can accomplish my own wishes, I will consult yours still farther; for I shall always think of your services with gratitude,—though you *did* shut the door in my face."

"No, sir," replied Job—"life is a blessing I would fain enjoy a few years longer; and, at present, my sojourn in England would put it wofully in danger of *'club law.'* Besides, I begin to think that a good character is a very agreeable thing, when not too troublesome; and, as I have none left in England, I may as well make the experiment abroad. If your honour will call at the magistrate's, and take a warrant and an officer, for the purpose of ridding me of my charge, at the very instant I see my responsibility at an end I will have the honour of bidding you adieu."

"Well, as you please," said I.—"Curse your scoundrel's cosmetics! How the deuce am I ever to regain my natural complexion? Look ye, sirrah! you have painted me with a long wrinkle on the left side of my mouth, big enough to engulf all the beauty I ever had. Why, water seems to have no effect upon it!"

"To be sure not, sir," said Job,

calmly—"I should be but a poor dauber if my paints washed off with a wet sponge."

"Grant me patience!" cried I, in a real panic: "how, in the name of Heaven, *are* they to wash off! Am I, before I have reached my twenty-third year, to look like a methodist parson on the wrong side of forty, you rascal!"

"The latter question, your honour can best answer," returned Job. "With regard to the former, I have an unguent here, if you will suffer me to apply it, which will remove all other colours than those which nature has bestowed upon you."

With that, Job produced a small box; and, after a brief submission to his skill, I had the ineffable joy of beholding myself restored to my original state. Nevertheless, my delight was somewhat checked by the loss of my curls: I thanked Heaven, however, that the damage had been sustained *after* Ellen's acceptance of my addresses. A lover confined to one, should not be too destructive, for fear of the consequences to the remainder of the female world:—compassion is ever due to the fair sex.

My toilet being concluded, Jonson and I repaired to the magistrate's. He waited at the corner of the street, while I entered the house—

"'Twere vain to tell what shook the holy Man,
Who looked, not lovingly, at that divan."

Having summoned to my aid the redoubted Mr. ——— of mulberry-checked recollection, we entered a hackney coach, and drove to Jonson's lodgings, Job mounting guard on the box.

"I think, sir," said Mr. ———, looking up at the man of two virtues, "that I have had the pleasure of seeing that gentleman before."

"Very likely," said I; "he is a young man greatly about town."

When we had safely lodged Dawson

(who seemed more collected, and even courageous, than I had expected) in the coach, Job beckoned me into a little parlour. I signed him a draft on my bankers for one hundred pounds—though at that time it was like letting the last drop from my veins—and faithfully promised, should Dawson's evidence procure the desired end (of which indeed, there was now no doubt,) that the annuity should be regularly paid, as he desired. We then took an affectionate farewell of each other.

"Adieu, sir!" said Job, "I depart into a new world—that of honest men!"

"If so," said I, "adieu indeed!—for on this earth we shall never meet again!"

We returned to — Street. As I was descending from the coach, a female, wrapped from head to foot in a cloak, came eagerly up to me, and seized me by the arm. "For God's sake," said she, in a low, hurried voice, "come aside, and speak to me for a single moment." Consigning Dawson to the sole charge of the officer, I did as I was desired. When we had got some paces down the street, the female stopped. Though she held her veil closely drawn over her face, her voice and air were not to be mistaken: I knew her at once. "Glanville," said she, with great agitation, "Sir Reginald Glanville; tell me, is he in real danger?" She stopped short—she could say no more.

"I trust not!" said I, appearing not to recognise the speaker.

"I trust not!" she repeated; "is that all!" And then the passionate feelings of her sex overcoming every other consideration, she seized me by the hand, and said—"Oh, Mr. Pelham, for mercy's sake, tell me, is he in the power of that villain Thornton? You need disguise nothing from me; I know all the fatal history."

"Compose yourself, dear, dear Lady Roseville," said I, soothingly; "for it

is in vain any longer to affect not to know you. Glanville is safe; I have brought with me a witness whose testimony *must* release him."

"God bless you, God bless you!" said Lady Roseville, and she burst into tears; but she dried them directly, and recovering some portion of that dignity which never long forsakes a woman of virtuous and educated mind, she resumed, proudly, yet bitterly—"It is no ordinary motive, no motive which you might reasonably impute to me, that has brought me here. Sir Reginald Glanville can never be any thing more to me than a friend—but, of all friends, the most known and valued. I learned from his servant of his disappearance; and my acquaintance with his secret history enabled me to account for it in the most fearful manner. In short, I—I—but explanations are idle now; you will never say that you have seen me here, Mr. Pelham: you will endeavour even to forget it—farewell."

Lady Roseville, then drawing her cloak closely round her, left me with a fleet and light step, and, turning the corner of the street, disappeared.

I returned to my charge: I demanded an immediate interview with the magistrate. "I have come," said I, "to redeem my pledge, and procure the acquittal of the innocent." I then briefly related my adventures, only concealing (according to my promise) all description of my help-mate, Job; and prepared the worthy magistrate for the confession and testimony of Dawson. That unhappy man had just concluded his narration, when an officer entered, and whispered the magistrate that Thornton was in waiting.

"Admit him," said Mr. ———, aloud. Thornton entered with his usual easy and swaggering air of effrontery; but no sooner did he set his eyes upon Dawson, than a deadly and withering change passed over

his countenance. Dawson could not bridle the cowardly petulance of his spite. "They know all, Thornton!" said he, with a look of triumph. The villain turned slowly from him to us, muttering something we could not hear. He saw upon my face, upon the magistrate's, that his doom was

sealed: his desperation gave him presence of mind, and he made sudden rush to the door;—the officer in waiting seized him. Why should I detail the rest of the scene? It was that day fully committed for trial and Sir Reginald Glanville honourably released, and unhesitatingly acquitted.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

Un hymen qu'on souhaite

Entre les gens comme nous est chose bientôt-faite,
Je te veux ; me veux-tu de même ?—MOLIÈRE.

So may he rest, his faults lie gently on him.—SHAKSPEARE.

THE main interest of my adventures—if, indeed, I may flatter myself that they ever contained any—is now over; the mystery is explained, the innocent acquitted, and the guilty condemned. Moreover, all obstacles between the marriage of the unworthy hero with the peerless heroine being removed, it would be but an idle prolixity to linger over the preliminary details of an orthodox and customary courtship. Nor is it for me to dilate upon the exaggerated expressions of gratitude, in which the affectionate heart of Glanville found vent for my fortunate exertions on his behalf. He was not willing that any praise to which I might be entitled for them, should be lost. He narrated to Lady Glanville and Ellen my adventures with the comrades of the worthy Job; from the lips of the mother, and the eyes of the dear sister, came my sweetest addition to the good fortune which had made me the instrument of Glanville's safety and acquittal. I was not condemned to a long protraction of that time, which, if it be justly termed the happiest of our lives, *we*, (viz. all true lovers,) through that perversity common to human nature, most ardently wish to terminate.

On that day month which saw Glanville's release, my bridals were appointed. Reginald was even more eager than myself in pressing for an early day; firmly persuaded that his end was rapidly approaching, his most prevailing desire was to witness our union. This wish, and the interest he took in our happiness, gave him an energy and animation which impressed us with the deepest hopes for his ultimate recovery; and the fatal disease to which he was a prey, nursed the fondness of our hearts by the bloom of cheek, and brightness of eye, with which it veiled its desolating and gathering progress.

From the eventful day on which I had seen Lady Roseville, in ——— Street, we had not met. She had shut herself up in her splendid home, and the newspapers teemed with regret at the reported illness and certain seclusion of one whose *fêtes* and gaieties had furnished them with their brightest pages. The only one admitted to her was Ellen. To her, she had for some time made no secret of her attachment—and from her the daily news of Sir Reginald's health was ascertained. Several times, when at a late hour I left Glanville's apart-

ments, I passed the figure of a woman, closely muffled, and apparently watching before his windows—which, owing to the advance of summer, were never closed—to catch, perhaps, a view of his room, or a passing glimpse of his emaciated and fading figure. If that sad and lonely vigil was kept by her whom I suspected, deep, indeed, and mighty was the love, which could so humble the heart, and possess the spirit, of the haughty and high-born Countess of Roseville!

I turn to a very different personage in this *véritable histoire*. My father and mother were absent at Lady H.'s when my marriage was fixed; to both of them I wrote for their approbation of my choice. From Lady Frances I received the answer which I subjoin:—

“MY DEAREST SON,

“Your father desires me to add his congratulations to mine, upon the election you have made. I shall hasten to London, to be present at the ceremony. Although you must not be offended with me, if I say, that with your person, accomplishments, birth, and (above all) high *ton*, you might have chosen among the loftiest and wealthiest families in the country; yet I am by no means displeased or disappointed with your future wife. To say nothing of the antiquity of her name, (the Glanvilles intermarried with the Pelhams, in the reign of Henry II.) it is a great step to future distinction to marry a beauty, especially one so celebrated as Miss Glanville—perhaps it is among the surest ways to the cabinet. The forty thousand pounds which you say Miss Glanville is to receive, make, to be sure, but a slender income; though, when added to your own fortune, that sum in ready money would have been a great addition to the Glenmorris property, if your uncle—I have no patience with him—had not married again.

“However you will lose no time in getting into the House—at all events the capital will ensure your return for a borough, and maintain you comfortably, till you are in the administration; when of course it matters very little what your fortune may be—tradesmen will be too happy to have your name in their books; be sure, therefore, that the money is not tied up. Miss Glanville must see that her own interest, as well as yours, is concerned in your having the unfettered disposal of a fortune, which, if restricted, you would find it impossible to live upon. Pray, how is Sir Reginald Glanville? Is his cough as bad as ever! By the by, how is his property entailed?

“Will you order Stonor to have the house ready for us on Friday, when I shall return home in time for dinner? Let me again congratulate you, most sincerely, on your choice. I always thought you had more common sense, as well as genius, than any young man I ever knew: you have shown it in this important step. Domestic happiness, my dearest Henry, ought to be peculiarly sought for by every Englishman, however elevated his station; and when I reflect upon Miss Glanville's qualifications, and her celebrity as a beauty, I have no doubt of your possessing the felicity you deserve. But be sure that the fortune is not settled away from you; poor Sir Reginald is not (I believe) at all covetous or worldly, and will not, therefore, insist upon the point.

“God bless you, and grant you every happiness.

“Ever, my dear Henry,

“Your very affectionate Mother,

“F. PELHAM.”

“P.S. I think it will be better to give out that Miss Glanville has *eighty* thousand pounds. Be sure, therefore, that you do not contradict me.”

The days, the weeks flew away. Ah, happy days ! yet I do not regret while I recal you ! He that loves much, fears even in his best founded hopes. What were the anxious longings for a treasure—in my view only, not in my possession—to the deep joy of finding it for ever my own.

The day arrived—I was yet at my toilet, and Bedos, in the greatest confusion ;—(poor fellow, he was as happy as myself !) when a letter was brought me, stamped with the foreign post mark. It was from the exemplary Job Jonson, and though I did not even open it on that day, yet it shall be more favoured by the reader—viz., if he will not pass over, without reading, the following effusion :—

“ Rue des Moulins, No. —, Paris.

“ HONOURED SIR,

“ I arrived in Paris safely, and reading in the English papers the full success of our enterprise, as well as in the Morning Post of the —th, your approaching marriage with Miss Glanville, I cannot refrain from the liberty of congratulating you upon both, as well as of reminding you of the exact day on which the first quarter of my annuity will be due :—it is the — of — ; for I presume, your honour kindly made me a present of the draft for one hundred pounds, in order to pay my travelling expenses.

“ I find that the boys are greatly incensed against me ; but as Dawson was too much bound by his oath to betray a tittle against them, I trust I shall ultimately pacify the club, and return to England. A true patriot, sir, never loves to leave his native country. Even were I compelled to visit Van Diemen's Land, the ties of birth-place would be so strong as to induce me to seize the first opportunity of returning ! I am not, your honour, very fond of the French—they are an idle, frivolous, penurious, poor nation. Only think, sir, the

other day I saw a gentleman of the most noble air secrete something at a *café*, which I could not clearly discern : as he wrapped it carefully in paper, before he placed it in his pocket, I judged that it was a silver cream ewer at least ; accordingly, I followed him out, and from pure curiosity—I do assure your honour, it was from no other motive—I transferred this purloined treasure to my own pocket. You will imagine, sir, the interest with which I hastened to a lonely spot in the Tuileries, and carefully taking out the little packet, unfolded paper by paper, till I came to—yes, sir, till I came to—*five lumps of sugar* ! Oh, the French are a mean people—a very mean people—I hope I shall soon be able to return to England. Meanwhile, I am going into Holland, to see how those rich burghers spend their time and their money. I suppose poor Dawson, as well as the rascal Thornton, will be hung before you receive this—they deserve it richly—it is such fellows who disgrace the profession. He is but a very poor bungler who is forced to cut throats as well as pockets. And now, your honour, wishing you all happiness with your lady,

“ I beg to remain,

“ Your very obedient humble Servant,

“ FERDINAND DE COUROY, &c. &c.”

Struck with the joyous countenance of my honest valet, as I took my gloves and hat from his hand, I could not help wishing to bestow upon him a blessing similar to that I was about to possess. “ Bedos,” said I, “ Bedos, my good fellow, you left your wife to come to me ; you shall not suffer by your fidelity : send for her—we will find room for her in our future establishment.”

The smiling face of the Frenchman underwent a rapid change. “ *Ma foi*, said he, in his own tongue ; “ Monsieur is too good. An excess of happiness

hardens the heart ; and so, for fear of forgetting my gratitude to Providence, I will, with Monsieur's permission, suffer my adored wife to remain where she is."

After so pious a reply, I should have been worse than wicked had I pressed the matter any further.

I found all ready at Berkeley-square. Lady Glanville is one of those good persons, who think a marriage out of church is no marriage at all ; to church, therefore, we went. Although Reginald was now so reduced that he could scarcely support the least fatigue, he insisted on giving Ellen away. He was that morning, and had been, for the last two or three days, considerably better, and our happiness seemed to grow less selfish in our increasing hope of his recovery.

When we returned from church, our intention was to set off immediately to —— Hall, a seat which I had hired for our reception. On re-entering the house, Glanville called me aside—I followed his infirm and tremulous steps into a private apartment.

"Pelham," said he, "we shall never meet again! No matter—you are now happy, and I shall shortly be so. But there is one office I have yet to

request from your friendship ; when I am dead, let me be buried by *her* side, and let one tombstone cover both."

I pressed his hand, and, with tears in my eyes, made him the promise he required.

"It is enough," said he ; "I have no farther business with life. God bless you, my friend—my brother ; do not let a thought of me cloud your happiness."

He rose, and we turned to quit the room ; Glanville was leaning on my arm ; when he had moved a few paces towards the door, he stopped abruptly. Imagining that the pause proceeded from pain or debility, I turned my eyes upon his countenance—a fearful and convulsive change was rapidly passing over it—his eyes stared wildly upon vacancy.

"Merciful God—is it—can it be?" he said, in a low, inward tone.

Before I could speak, I felt his hand relax its grasp upon my arm—he fell upon the floor—I raised him—a smile of ineffable serenity and peace was upon his lips ; his face was the face of an angel, but the spirit had passed away!

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

Now haveth good day, good men all,
 Haveth good day, yong and old ;
 Haveth good day, both great and small,
 And graunt merci a thousand fold !
 Gif ever I might full fain I wold,
 Don ought that were unto your leve,
 Christ keep you out of carès cold,
 For now 'tis time to take my leave.—*Old Song.*

SEVERAL months have now elapsed since my marriage. I am living quietly in the country, among my books, and looking forward with calmness, rather than impatience, to the time which shall again bring me before the world. Marriage with me is not that sepulchre of all human hope and energy which it often is with others. I am not more partial to my arm chair, nor more averse to shaving than of yore. I do not bound my prospects to the dinner-hour, nor my projects to "migrations from the blue bed to the brown." Matrimony found me ambitious ; it has not cured me of the passion : but it has concentrated what was scattered, and determined what was vague. If I am less anxious than formerly for the reputation to be acquired in society, I am more eager for honour in the world ; and instead of amusing my enemies, and the saloon, I trust yet to be useful to my friends and to mankind.

Whether this is a hope, altogether vain and idle ; whether I have, in the self-conceit common to all men, (thou wilt perchance add, peculiarly prominent in myself!) overrated both the power and the integrity of my mind (for the one is bootless without the other,) neither I nor the world can yet tell. "Time," says one of the fathers, "is the only touchstone which distinguishes the prophet from the joaster."

Meanwhile, gentle reader, during the two years which I purpose devoting to solitude and study, I shall not be so occupied with my fields and folios, as to become uncourteous to thee. If ever thou hast known me in the city, I give thee a hearty invitation to come and visit me in the country. I promise thee that my wines and viands shall not disgrace the companion of Gulo-seton ; nor my conversation be much duller than my book. I will compliment thee on thy horses,—thou shalt congratulate me upon my wife. Over old wine we will talk over new events ; and, if we flag at the latter, why, we will make ourselves amends with the former. In short, if thou art neither very silly nor very wise, it shall be thine own fault if we are not excellent friends.

I feel that it would be but poor courtesy in me, after having kept company with Lord Vincent through the tedious journey of these pages, to dismiss him now without one word of valediction. May he, in the political course he has adopted, find all the admiration which his talents deserve ; and if ever we meet as foes, let our heaviest weapon be a quotation, and our bitterest vengeance a jest.

Lord Gulo-seton regularly corresponds with me, and his last letter contained a promise to visit me in the course of the month, in order to recover his appetite (which has been

nuch relaxed of late) by the country air.

My uncle wrote to me, three weeks since, announcing the death of the infant Lady Glenmorris had brought him. Sincerely do I wish that his loss may be supplied. I have already sufficient fortune for my wants, and sufficient *hope* for my desires.

Thornton died as he had lived—the reprobate and the ruffian. “Pooh,” said he, in his quaint brutality, to the worthy clergyman who attended his last moments with more zeal than success; “Pooh, what’s the difference between gospel and go—spell? we agree like a bell and its clapper—you’re prating while I’m *hanging*.”

Dawson died in prison, penitent and in peace. Cowardice, which spoils the honest man, often redeems the knave.

From Lord Dawton I have received a letter, requesting me to accept a borough (in his gift), just vacated. It is a pity that generosity—such a prodigal to those who do not want it—should often be such a niggard to those who do. I need not specify my answer. I hope yet to teach Lord Dawton, that to forgive the minister is not to forget the affront. Meanwhile, I am content to bury myself in my retreat, with my mute teachers of logic and legislature, in order, hereafter, to justify his lordship’s good opinion of my abilities. Farewell, Brutus, we shall meet at Philippi!

It is some months since Lady Roseville left England; the last news we received of her, informed us that she was living at Sienna, in utter seclusion, and very infirm health.

* The day drags thro’, though storms keep out the sun,
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on.”

Poor Lady Glanville! the mother of one so beautiful, so gifted, and so lost. What can I say of her which “you, and you, and you —” all who

are parents, cannot feel, a thousand times more acutely, in those recesses of the heart too deep for words or tears. There are yet many hours in which I find the sister of the departed in grief that even her husband cannot console: and I — I — my friend, my brother, have I forgotten thee in death? I lay down the pen, I turn from my employment—thy dog is at my feet, and looking at me, as if conscious of my thoughts, with an eye almost as tearful as my own.

But it is not thus that I will part from my Reader; our greeting was not in sorrow, neither shall be our adieus. For thee, who hast gone with me through the motley course of my confessions, I would fain trust that I have sometimes hinted at thy instruction, when only appearing to strive for thy amusement. But on this I will not dwell; for the moral *insisted upon* often loses its effect; and all that I will venture to hope is, that I have opened to thee one true, and not utterly hacknied, page in the various and mighty volume of mankind. In this busy and restless world I have not been a vague speculator, nor an idle actor. While all around me were vigilant, I have not laid me down to sleep—even for the luxury of a poet’s dream. Like the school-boy, I have considered study *as* study, but action as delight.

Nevertheless, whatever I have seen, or heard, or felt, has been treasured in my memory, and brooded over by my thoughts. I now place the result before you—

“Sicut meus est mos,
Nescio quid meditans nugarum; —

but not perhaps,

—— “totus in illis.” *

Whatever society—whether in a

* “According to my custom, meditating, I scarcely know what of trifles; but not, perhaps, wholly wrapt in them.”

higher or lower grade—I have portrayed, my sketches have been taken rather as a witness than a copyist; for I have never shunned that circle, nor that individual, which presented life in a fresh view, or man in a new relation. It is right, however, that I should add, that as I have not wished to be an individual satirist, rather than a general observer, I have occasionally, in the subordinate characters (such as Russelton and Gordon), taken only the outline from truth, and filled up the colours at my leisure and my will.*

With regard to myself I have been

* May the Author, as well as the Hero, be permitted, upon this point, to solicit attention and belief. In all the lesser characters, of which the *first* idea was taken from life, especially those referred to in the text, he has, for reasons perhaps obvious enough without the tedium of recital, *purposely* introduced sufficient variation and addition to remove, in his own opinion, the odium either of a copy or of a caricature. The Author thinks it the more necessary *in the present* edition to insist upon this, with all honest and sincere earnestness, because *in the first* it was too much the custom of criticism to judge of his sketches from a resemblance to some supposed originals, and not from adherence to that sole source of all legitimate imitation—Nature;—Nature as exhibited in the general mass, not in the *isolated instance*. It is the duty of the

more candid. I have not only *shown*—*non parca manu*—my faults, but (grant that this is a much rarer exposure) my *foibles*; and, in my anxiety for your entertainment, I have not grudged you the pleasure of a laugh—even at my own expense. Forgive me, then, if I am not a fashionable hero—forgive me if I have not wept over a “*blighted spirit*,” nor boasted of a “*British heart* ;” and allow that a man who, in these days of alternate Warters and Worthies, is neither the one nor the other, is, at least, a novelty in print, though, I fear, common enough in life.

And now, my kind reader, having remembered the proverb, and in saying one word to thee having said two for myself, I will no longer detain thee. Whatever thou mayest think of me and my thousand faults, both as an author and a man, believe me it is with a sincere and affectionate wish for the accomplishment of my parting words, that I bid thee—*farewell* !

novelist rather to abstract than to copy :—all humours—all individual peculiarities are his appropriate and fair materials : not so are the *humourist* and the *individual* ! Observation should resemble the eastern bird, and, while it nourishes itself upon the *suction* of a *thousand* flowers, never be seen to set upon *one* !





LUCRETIA.

LUCRETIA

OR

THE CHILDREN OF NIGHT

BY

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(LORD LYTTON)

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

LONDON: BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL

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PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

LUCRETIA, OR THE CHILDREN OF NIGHT, was begun simultaneously with THE CAXTONS, a FAMILY PICTURE. The two fictions were intended as *pendants*; both serving, amongst other collateral aims and objects, to show the influence of home education,—of early circumstance and example upon after character and conduct. LUCRETIA was completed and published before THE CAXTONS. The moral design of the first was misunderstood and assailed; that of the last was generally acknowledged and approved; the moral design in both was nevertheless precisely the same. But in one it was sought through the darker side of human nature, in the other, through the more sunny and cheerful—one shows the evil, the other the salutary influences of early circumstance and training. Necessarily therefore the first resorts to the tragic elements of awe and distress—the second to the comic elements of humour and agreeable emotion. These differences serve to explain the different reception that awaited the two, and may teach us how little the real conception of an author is known, and how little it is cared for: we judge—not by the purpose he conceives, but according as the impressions he effects are pleasurable or painful. But while I cannot acquiesce in much of the hostile criticism this fiction produced at its first appearance, I readily allow that, as a mere question of art, the story might have been improved in itself, and rendered more acceptable to the reader, by diminishing the gloom of the catastrophe. In this edition I have endeavoured to do so;

and the victim whose fate in the former cast of the work most revolted the reader, as a violation of the trite but amiable law of Poetical Justice, is saved from the hands of THE CHILDREN OF NIGHT. Perhaps—whatever the faults of this work—it equals most of its companions in the sustainment of interest, and in that coincidence between the gradual development of motive or passion, and the sequences of external events constituting plot, which mainly distinguish the physical awe of tragedy from the coarse horrors of melodrama. I trust at least that I shall *now* find few readers, who will not readily acknowledge that the delineation of crime has only been employed for the grave and impressive purpose which brings it within the due province of the poet, as an element of terror and a warning to the heart. But should any candid reader, after careful perusal, close this book with a doubt as to its ethical object and tendency, or as to the sanction of its sombre materials by the example of the greatest masters in imaginative compositions,—I will entreat him to cast his eye over the Critical Essay entitled A WORD TO THE PUBLIC, appended to this edition, which contains all that I can desire to say in definition of the purpose designed in *Lucretia*,—and in defence of those legitimate sources of tragic interest from which the narrative is derived.

LONDON, Dec. 7th, 1853.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

IT is somewhere about four years since I appeared before the public as the writer of a fiction, which I then intimated would probably be my last ; but bad habits are stronger than good intentions. When Fabricio, in his hospital, resolved upon abjuring the vocation of the Poet, he was in truth re-commencing his desperate career by a Farewell to the Muses :—I need not apply the allusion.

I must own, however, that there had long been a desire in my mind to trace, in some work or other,—the strange and secret ways through which that Arch-ruler of Civilisation, familiarly called “ Money,”—insinuates itself into our thoughts and motives, our hearts and actions ; affecting those who undervalue as those who over-estimate its importance ; ruining virtues in the spendthrift no less than engendering vices in the miser. But when I half implied my farewell to the character of a novelist, I had imagined that this conception might be best worked out upon the stage. After some unpublished and imperfect attempts towards so realising my design, I found either that the subject was too wide for the limits of the Drama, or that I wanted that faculty of concentration which alone enables the dramatist to compress multiform varieties into a very limited compass. With this design, I desired to unite some exhibition of what seems to me a principal vice in the hot and emulous chase for happiness or fame, fortune or knowledge, which is almost synonymous with the cant

phrase of "the March of Intellect," in that crisis of society to which we have arrived. The vice I allude to is Impatience. That eager desire to press forward, not so much to conquer obstacles, as to elude them; that gambling with the solemn destinies of life, seeking ever to set success upon the chance of a die; that hastening from the wish conceived to the end accomplished; that thirst after quick returns to ingenious toil, and breathless spurtings along short cuts to the goal, which we see everywhere around us, from the Mechanics' Institute to the Stock Market,—beginning in education with the primers of infancy—deluging us with "Philosophies for the Million," and "Sciences made Easy;" characterising the books of our writers, the speeches of our statesmen, no less than the dealings of our speculators, seem, I confess, to me, to constitute a very diseased and very general symptom of the times. I hold that the greatest friend to man is labour; that knowledge without toil, if possible, were worthless; that toil in pursuit of knowledge is the best knowledge we can attain; that the continuous effort for ~~faræ~~ is nobler than fame itself; that it is not wealth suddenly acquired which is deserving of homage, but the virtues which a man exercises in the slow pursuit of wealth,—the abilities so called forth, the self-denials so imposed: in a word, that Labour and Patience are the true schoolmasters on earth. While occupied with these ideas and this belief, whether right or wrong, and slowly convinced that it was only in that species of composition with which I was most familiar that I could work out some portion of the plan that I began to contemplate, I became acquainted with the histories of two criminals, existing in our own age;—so remarkable, whether from the extent and darkness of the guilt committed—whether from the glittering accomplishments and lively temper of the one, the profound knowledge and intellectual capacities of the other—that the examination and analysis of characters so perverted became a study full of intense, if gloomy interest.

In these persons there appear to have been as few redeemable points as can be found in Human Nature, so far as such points may be traced in the kindly instincts and generous passions which do sometimes accompany the perpetration of great crimes, and without excusing the individual, vindicate the species. Yet, on the other hand, their sanguinary wickedness was not the dull ferocity of brutes;—it was accompanied with instruction and culture:—nay, it seemed to me, on studying their lives, and pondering over their own letters, that through their cultivation itself we could arrive at the secret of the ruthless and atrocious pre-eminence in evil these Children of Night had attained—that here the monster vanished into the mortal, and the phenomena that seemed aberrations from nature were explained.

I could not resist the temptation of reducing to a tale the materials which had so engrossed my interest and tasked my inquiries. And in this attempt, various incidental opportunities have occurred, if not of completely carrying out, still of incidentally illustrating, my earlier design;—of showing the influence of Mammon upon our most secret selves, of reproving the impatience which is engendered by a civilisation—that with much of the good brings all the evils of competition, and of tracing throughout all the influences of early household life upon our subsequent conduct and career. In such incidental bearings the moral may doubtless be more obvious than in the delineation of the darker and rarer crime which forms the staple of my narrative. For in extraordinary guilt, we are slow to recognise ordinary warnings—we say to the peaceful conscience, “This concerns thee not!”—whereas at each instance of familiar fault and common-place error we own a direct and sensible admonition. Yet in the portraiture of gigantic crime, poets have rightly found their sphere, and fulfilled their destiny, of teachers. Those terrible truths, which appal us in the guilt of Macbeth, or the villany of Iago, have their moral uses

not less than the popular infirmities of Tom Jones, or the everyday hypocrisy of Blifil.

Incredible as it may seem, the crimes herein related took place within the last seventeen years. There has been no exaggeration as to their extent, no great departure from their details—the means employed, even that which seems most far-fetched (the instrument of the poisoned ring), have their foundation in literal facts. Nor have I much altered the social position of the criminals, nor in the least over-rated their attainments and intelligence. In those more salient essentials, which will most, perhaps, provoke the Reader's incredulous wonder, I narrate a history, not invent a fiction.* All that romance which our own time affords is not more the romance than the philosophy of the time. Tragedy never quits the world—it surrounds us everywhere. We have but to look, wakeful and vigilant, abroad,—and from the age of Pelops to that of Borgia, the same crimes, though under different garbs, will stalk on our paths. Each age comprehends in itself specimens of every virtue and every vice which has ever inspired our love or moved our horror.

LONDON, *November 1st*, 1846.

* These criminals were not, however, in actual life, as in the novel, intimates and accomplices. Their crimes were of similar character, effected by similar agencies, and committed at dates which embrace their several careers of guilt within the same period: but I have no authority to suppose that the one was known to the other

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A WORD TO THE PUBLIC

LUCRETIA;

OR,

THE CHILDREN OF NIGHT.

PART THE FIRST.

PROLOGUE TO PART THE FIRST.

In an apartment at Paris, one morning, during the Reign of Terror, a man, whose age might be somewhat under thirty, sate before a table covered with papers, arranged and labelled with the methodical precision of a mind fond of order and habituated to business. Behind him rose a tall book-case, surmounted with a bust of Robespierre, and the shelves were filled chiefly with works of a scientific character; amongst which the greater number were on chemistry and medicine. There, were to be seen also many rare books on alchemy, the great Italian historians, some English philosophical treatises, and a few MSS. in Arabic. The absence, from this collection, of the stormy literature of the day, seemed to denote that the owner was a quiet student living apart from the strife and passions of the Revolution. This supposition was, however, disproved by certain papers on the table, which were formally and laconically labelled "Reports on Lyons," and by packets of letters in the handwritings of Robespierre and Couthon. At one of the windows, a young boy was earnestly engaged in some occupation, which appeared to excite the curiosity of the person just described; for this last, after examining the child's movements for a few moments with a silent scrutiny, that betrayed but little of the half-complacent, half-melancholy affection with which busy man is apt to regard idle childhood, rose noiselessly from his seat, approached the boy, and looked over his shoulder unobserved. In a crevice of the wood by the window, a huge black spider had formed his web; the child had just discovered another spider, and placed it in the meshes; he was watching the result of his operations. The intrusive spider stood motionless in the midst of the web, as if fascinated. The rightful possessor was also quiescent; but a very fine ear might have caught a low humming sound, which probably

augured no hospitable intentions to the invader. Anon, the stranger insect seemed suddenly to awake from its amaze; it evinced alarm, and turned to fly; the huge spider darted forward—the boy uttered a chuckle of delight. The man's pale lip curled into a sinister sneer, and he glided back to his seat. There, leaning his face on his hand, he continued to contemplate the child. That child might have furnished to an artist a fitting subject for fair and blooming infancy. His light hair, tinged deeply, it is true, with red, hung in sleek and glittering abundance down his neck and shoulders. His features, seen in profile, were delicately and almost femininely proportioned; health glowed on his cheek, and his form, slight though it was, gave promise of singular activity and vigour. His dress was fantastic, and betrayed the taste of some fondly foolish mother; but the fine linen, trimmed with lace, was rumpled and stained, the velvet jacket unbrushed, the shoes soiled with dust;—slight tokens these of neglect—but serving to show that the foolish fondness which had invented the dress, had not of late presided over the toilet.

"Child," said the man, first in French; and observing that the boy heeded him not—"child," he repeated in English, which he spoke well, though with a foreign accent—"child!"

The boy turned quickly.

"Has the great spider devoured the small one?"

"No, sir," said the boy, colouring; "the small one has had the best of it." The tone and heightened complexion of the child seemed to give meaning to his words—at least, so the man thought,—for a slight frown passed over his high, thoughtful brow.

"Spiders, then," he said, after a short pause, "are different from men; with us, the small do not get the

better of the great. Hum! do you still miss your mother?"

"Oh, yes!" and the boy advanced eagerly to the table.

"Well, you will see her once again." "When?"

The man looked towards a clock on the mantel-piece—"Before that clock strikes. Now, go back to your spiders." The child looked irresolute and disinclined to obey; but a stern and terrible expression gathered slowly over the man's face; and the boy, growing pale as he remarked it, crept back to the window.

The father, for such was the relation the owner of the room bore to the child, drew paper and ink towards him, and wrote for some minutes rapidly. Then starting up, he glanced at the clock, took his hat and cloak, which lay on a chair beside, drew up the collar of the mantle till it almost concealed his countenance, and said—"Now, boy, come with me; I have promised to show you an execution. I am going to keep my promise. Come!"

The boy clapped his hands with joy; and you might see then, child as he was, that those fair features were capable of a cruel and ferocious expression. The character of the whole face changed. He caught up his gay cap and plume, and followed his father into the streets.

Silently the two took their way towards the *Barrière du Trône*. At a distance, they saw the crowd growing thick and dense, as throng after throng hurried past them, and the dreadful guillotine rose high in the light blue air. As they came into the skirts of the mob, the father, for the first time, took his child's hand. "I must get you a good place for the show," he said, with a quiet smile.

There was something in the grave, staid, courteous, yet haughty bearing of the man, that made the crowd give way as he passed. They got near the

dismal scene, and obtained entrance into a wagon already crowded with eager spectators.

And now they heard at a distance the harsh and lumbering roll of the tumbril that bore the victims, and the tramp of the horses which guarded the procession of death. The boy's whole attention was absorbed in expectation of the spectacle, and his ear was, perhaps, less accustomed to French, though born and reared in France, than to the language of his mother's lips—and she was English: thus he did not hear or heed certain observations of the bye-standers, which made his father's pale cheek grow paler.

"What is the batch to-day?" quoth a butcher in the wagon.

"Scarce worth the baking—only two:—but one, they say, is an aristocrat—a *çi-d-vant* marquis," answered a carpenter.

"Ah! a marquis!—*Bon!*—And the other?"

"Only a dancer; but a pretty one, it is true: I could pity her but she is English." And as he pronounced the last word, with a tone of inexpressible contempt, the butcher spat, as if in nausea.

"*Mort diable!* a spy of Pitt's, no doubt. What did they discover?"

A man better dressed than the rest, turned round with a smile, and answered—"Nothing worse than a lover, I believe; but that lover was a *proscrit*. The *çi-d-vant* marquis was caught disguised in her apartment. She betrayed for him a good easy friend of the people, who had long loved her, and revenge is sweet."

The man whom we have accompanied nervously twitched up the collar of his cloak, and his compressed lips told that he felt the anguish of the laugh that circled round him.

"They are coming! There they are!" cried the boy in ecstatic excitement.

"That's the way to bring up

citizens," said the butcher, patting the child's shoulder, and opening a still better view for him at the edge of the wagon.

The crowd now abruptly gave way. The tumbril was in sight. A man, young and handsome, standing erect and with folded arms in the fatal vehicle, looked along the mob with an eye of careless scorn. Though he wore the dress of a workman, the most unpractised glance could detect, in his mien and bearing, one of the hated *noblesse*, whose characteristics came out even more forcibly at the hour of death. On the lip was that smile of gay and insolent levity, on the brow that gallant if reckless contempt of physical danger, which had signalled the hero-coxcombs of the old *régime*. Even the rude dress was worn with a certain air of foppery, and the bright hair was carefully adjusted as if for the holiday of the headsman. As the eyes of the young noble wandered over the fierce faces of that horrible assembly, while a roar of hideous triumph answered the look, in which for the last time the *gentilhomme* spoke his scorn of the *canaille*, the child's father lowered the collar of his cloak, and slowly raised his hat from his brow. The eye of the marquis rested upon the countenance thus abruptly shown to him, and which suddenly became individualised amongst the crowd,—that eye instantly lost its calm contempt. A shudder passed visibly over his frame, and his cheek grew blanched with terror. The mob saw the change, but not the cause, and loud and louder rose their triumphant yell. The sound recalled the pride of the young noble;—he started—lifted his erect, and sought again to meet the look which had appalled him. But he could no longer single it out among the crowd. Hat and cloak once more hid the face of the foe, and crowds of eager heads intercepted the view.

The young marquis's lips muttered; he bent down, and then the crowd caught sight of his companion, who was being lifted up from the bottom of the tumbril, where she had flung herself in horror and despair. The crowd grew still in a moment, as the pale face of one, familiar to most of them, turned wildly from place to place in the dreadful scene, vainly and madly through its silence, imploring life and pity. How often had the sight of that face, not then pale and haggard, but wreathed with rosy smiles, sufficed to draw down the applause of the crowded theatre—how, then, had those breasts, now fevered by the thirst of blood, held hearts spell-bound by the airy movements of that exquisite form writhing now in no stage-mime agony! Play-thing of the city—minion to the light amusement of the hour—frail child of Cytherea and the Graces, what relentless fate has conducted *thee* to the shambles? Butterfly of the summer, why should a nation rise to break *thee* upon the wheel? A sense of the

mockery of such an execution, of the horrible burlesque that would sacrifice to the necessities of a mighty people so slight an offering, made itself felt among the crowd. There was a low murmur of shame and indignation. The dangerous sympathy of the mob was perceived by the officer in attendance. Hastily he made the sign to the headsman, and, as he did so, a child's cry was heard in the English tongue—"Mother—mother!" The Father's hand grasped the child's arm, with an iron pressure; the crowd swam before the boy's eyes; the air seemed to stifle him, and become blood-red; only through the hum, and the tramp, and the roll of the drums, he heard a low voice hiss in his ear—"Learn how they perish who betray me!"

As the father said these words, again his face was bare, and the woman whose ear, amidst the dull insanity of fear, had caught the cry of her child's voice, saw that face, and fell back insensible in the arms of the headsman.

CHAPTER I.

▲ FAMILY GROUPE.

ONE July evening, at the commencement of the present century, several persons were somewhat picturesquely grouped along an old-fashioned terrace, which skirted the garden side of a manor-house that had considerable pretensions to baronial dignity. The architecture was of the most enriched and elaborate style belonging to the reign of James the First: the porch, opening on the terrace, with its mul-lion window above, was encased with pilasters and reliefs, at once ornamental and massive; and the large square tower in which it was placed, was surmounted by a stone falcon, whose talons gripped fiercely a scutcheon blazoned with the five pointed stars which heralds recognise as the arms of St. John. On either side this tower extended long wings, the dark brickwork of which was relieved with noble stone casements and carved pediments; the high roof was partially concealed by a balustrade, perforated not inelegantly into arabesque designs; and what architects call 'the sky line' was broken with imposing effect by tall chimney shafts, of various form and fashion. These wings terminated in angular towers, similar to the centre, though kept duly subordinate to it both in size and decoration, and crowned with stone cupolas. A low balustrade, of later date than that which adorned the roof, relieved by vases and statues, bordered the terrace, from which a double flight of steps descended to a smooth lawn, intersected by broad gravel walks, shadowed by vast and stately cedars, and gently and gradually

mingling with the wilder scenery of the park, from which it was only divided by a ha-ha.

Upon the terrace, and under cover of a temporary awning, sate the owner, Sir Miles St. John, of Laughton, a comely old man, dressed with faithful precision to the costume which he had been taught to consider appropriate to his rank of gentleman, and which was not yet wholly obsolete and eccentric. His hair, still thick and luxuriant, was carefully powdered, and collected into a club behind. His nether man attired in grey breeches and pearl coloured silk stockings; his vest of silk, opening wide at the breast, and showing a profusion of frill, slightly sprinkled with the pulvilio of his favourite martinique; his three-cornered hat, placed on a stool at his side, with a gold-headed crutch-cane,—hat made rather to be carried in the hand than worn on the head, the diamond in his shirt-breech, the diamond on his finger, the ruffles at his wrist,—all bespoke the gallant, who had chatted with Lord Chesterfield, and supped with Mrs. Clive. On a table before him, were placed two or three decanters of wine, the fruits of the season, an enamelled snuff-box, in which was set the portrait of a female—perhaps the Chloe or Phillis of his early love-ditties; a lighted taper, a small china jar containing tobacco, and three or four pipes of homely clay, for cherry-sticks and meerschaums were not then in fashion; and Sir Miles St. John, once a gay and sparkling beau, now a popular country gentleman, great at county meetings

and sheep-shearing festivals, had taken to smoking, as in harmony with his bucolic transformation; an old setter lay dozing at his feet; a small spaniel—old, too—was sauntering lazily in the immediate neighbourhood, looking gravely out for such stray bits of biscuit as had been thrown forth to provoke him to exercise, and which hitherto had escaped his attention. Half seated, half reclined on the balustrade, apart from the Baronet, but within reach of his conversation, lolled a man in the prime of life, with an air of unmistakable and sovereign elegance and distinction. Mr. Vernon was a guest from London: and the London man, the man of clubs, and dinners and routs—of noon loungings through Bond Street; and nights spent with the Prince of Wales, seemed stamped not more upon the careful carelessness of his dress, and upon the worn expression of his delicate features, than upon the listless *ennui*, which, characterising both his face and attitude, appeared to take pity on himself for having been entrapped into the country.

Yet we should convey an erroneous impression of Mr. Vernon, if we designed, by the words “listless *ennui*,” to depict the slumberous insipidity of more modern affectation—it was not the *ennui* of a man to whom *ennui* is habitual; it was rather the indolent prostration that fills up the intervals of excitement. At that day, the word “*blasé*” was unknown; men had not enough sentiment for satiety. There was a kind of Bacchanalian fury in the life led by those leaders of fashion among whom Mr. Vernon was not the least distinguished: it was a day of deep drinking, of high play, of jovial reckless dissipation—of strong appetite for fun and riot—of four-in-hand coachmanship—of prize-fighting—of a strange sort of barbarous manliness, that strained every nerve of the constitution; a race of life, in which

three fourths of the competitors died half-way in the hippodrome. What is now the Dandy was then the Buck; and something of the Buck, though subdued by a chaster taste than fell to the ordinary members of his class, was apparent in Mr. Vernon's costume as well as air. Intricate folds of muslin, arranged in prodigious bows and ends, formed the cravat, which Brummell had not yet arisen to reform; his hat of a very peculiar shape, low at the crown and broad at the brim, was worn with an air of devil-me-care defiance; his watch-chain, garnished with a profusion of rings and seals, hung low from his white waistcoat; and the adaptation of his nankin inexpressibles to his well-shaped limbs, was a masterpiece of art. His whole dress and air was not what could properly be called foppish—it was rather what at that time was called ‘rakish.’ Few could so closely approach vulgarity without being vulgar: of that privileged few, Mr. Vernon was one of the elect. Further on, and near the steps descending into the garden, stood a man in an attitude of profound abstraction; his arms folded, his eyes bent on the ground, his brows slightly contracted; his dress was a plain black surtout, and pantaloons of the same colour; something both in the fashion of the dress, and still more in the face of the man, bespoke the foreigner.

Sir Miles St. John was an accomplished person for that time of day; he had made the grand tour; he had bought pictures and statues; he spoke and wrote well in the modern languages; and being rich, hospitable, social, and not averse from the reputation of a patron, he had opened his house freely to the host of emigrants whom the French Revolution had driven to our coasts. Olivier Dalibard, a man of considerable learning and rare scientific attainments, had been tutor in the house of the Marquis de G——, a

French nobleman, known many years before to the old baronet. The Marquis and his family had been among the first *émigrés* at the outbreak of the Revolution. The tutor had remained behind; for at that time no danger appeared to threaten those who pretended to no other aristocracy than that of letters. Contrary, as he said, with repentant modesty, to his own inclinations, he had been compelled, not only for his own safety, but for that of his friends, to take some part in the subsequent events of the Revolution—a part far from sincere, though so well had he simulated the patriot, that he had won the personal favour and protection of Robespierre; nor till the fall of that virtuous exterminator had he withdrawn from the game of politics, and effected in disguise his escape to England. As, whether from kindly or other motives, he had employed the power of his position in the esteem of Robespierre, to save certain noble heads from the guillotine—amongst others, the two brothers of the Marquis de G——, he was received with grateful welcome by his former patrons, who readily pardoned his career of Jacobinism, from their belief in his excuses, and their obligations to the services which that very career had enabled him to render to their kindred. Olivier Dalibard had accompanied the Marquis and his family in one of the frequent visits they paid to Laughton; and when the Marquis finally quitted England, and fixed his refuge at Vienna, with some connexions of his wife's, he felt a lively satisfaction at the thought of leaving his friend honourably, if unambitiously, provided for, as secretary and librarian to Sir Miles St. John. In fact, the scholar, who possessed considerable powers of fascination, had won no less favour with the English baronet than he had with the French dictator. He played well both at chess and backgammon; he was an extraordinary accountant; he had a variety of information upon all points, that rendered him more convenient than any cyclopædia in Sir Miles's library; and as he spoke both English and Italian with a correctness and fluency extremely rare in a Frenchman, he was of considerable service in teaching languages to (as well as directing the general literary education of) Sir Miles's favourite niece—whom we shall take an early opportunity to describe at length.

Nevertheless, there had been one serious obstacle to Dalibard's acceptance of the appointment offered to him by Sir Miles. Dalibard had under his charge a young orphan boy of some ten or twelve years old—a boy whom Sir Miles was not long in suspecting to be the scholar's son. This child had come from France with Dalibard, and (while the Marquis's family were in London) remained under the eye and care of his guardian or father, whichever was the true connexion between the two. But this superintendence became impossible, if Dalibard settled in Hampshire with Sir Miles St. John and the boy remained in London; nor, though the generous old gentleman offered to pay for the child's schooling, would Dalibard consent to part with him. At last, the matter was arranged: the boy was invited to Laughton on a visit, and was so lively, yet so well mannered, that he became a favourite, and was now fairly quartered in the house with his reputed father: and not to make an unnecessary mystery of this connexion, such was in truth the relationship between Olivier Dalibard and Honoré Gabriel Varney—a name significant of the double and illegitimate origin—a French father, an English mother; dropping, however, the purely French appellation of Honoré, he went familiarly by that of Gabriel. Half way down the steps stood the lad, pencil and tablet in

hand, sketching. Let us look over his shoulder—it is his father's likeness—a countenance in itself not very remarkable at the first glance, for the features were small, but when examined, it was one that most persons, women especially, would have pronounced handsome, and to which none could deny the higher praise of thought and intellect. A native of Provence, with some Italian blood in his veins—for his grandfather, a merchant of Marseilles, had married into a Florentine family settled at Leghorn—the dark complexion, common with those in the south, had been subdued, probably by the habits of the student, into a bronzed and steadfast paleness, which seemed almost fair by the contrast of the dark hair which he wore unpowdered, and the still darker brows which hung thick and prominent over clear grey eyes. Compared with the features, the skull was proportionally large, both behind and before; and a physiognomist would have drawn conclusions more favourable to the power than the tenderness of the Provencal's character, from the compact closeness of the lips and the breadth and massiveness of the iron jaw. But the son's sketch exaggerated every feature, and gave to the expression a malignant and terrible irony, not now, at least, apparent in the quiet and meditative aspect. Gabriel himself, as he stood, would have been a more tempting study to many an artist. It is true that he was small for his years; but his frame had a vigour in its light proportions, which came from a premature and almost adolescent symmetry of shape and muscular development. The countenance, however, had much of effeminate beauty; the long hair reached the shoulders, but did not curl; straight, fine, and glossy as a girl's, and, in colour, of the pale auburn, tinged with red, which rarely alters in hue as childhood matures to man;

the complexion was dazzlingly clear and fair. Nevertheless, there was something so hard in the lip, so bold, though not open, in the brow, that the girlishness of complexion, and even of outline, could not leave, on the whole, an impression of effeminacy. All the hereditary keenness and intelligence were stamped upon his face at that moment; but the expression had also a large share of the very irony and malice which he had conveyed to his caricature. The drawing itself was wonderfully vigorous and distinct, showing great artistic promise, and done with the rapidity and ease which betrayed practice. Suddenly his father turned, and with as sudden a quickness, the boy concealed his tablet in his vest; and the sinister expression of his face smoothed into a timorous smile, as his eye encountered Dalibard's. The father beckoned to the boy, who approached with alacrity. "Gabriel," whispered the Frenchman, in his own tongue, "where are they at this moment?"

The boy pointed silently towards one of the cedars. Dalibard mused an instant, and then slowly descending the steps, took his noiseless way over the smooth turf towards the tree. Its boughs drooped low and spread wide; and not till he was within a few paces of the spot, could his eye perceive two forms, seated on a bench under the dark green canopy. He then paused and contemplated them.

The one was a young man, whose simple dress and subdued air strongly contrasted the artificial graces and the modish languor of Mr. Vernon; but though wholly without that nameless distinction which sometimes characterises those conscious of pure race, and habituated to the atmosphere of courts, he had at least Nature's stamp of aristocracy in a form eminently noble, and features of manly, but surpassing beauty, which were not rendered less engaging by an expression of

modest timidity. He seemed to be listening with thoughtful respect to his companion, a young female by his side, who was speaking to him with an earnestness visible in her gestures and her animated countenance. And though there was much to notice in the various persons scattered over the scene, not one, perhaps—not the graceful Vernon—not the thoughtful scholar, nor his fair-haired hard-lipped son—not even the handsome listener she addressed—no, not one there would so have arrested the eye, whether of a physiognomist or a casual observer, as that young girl—Sir Miles St. John's favourite niece and presumptive heiress.

But as at that moment, the expression of her face differed from that habitual to it, we defer its description.

"Do not"—such were her words to her companion,—“do not alarm yourself by exaggerating the difficulties; do not even contemplate them—those be my care. Mainwaring, when I loved you, when, seeing that your diffidence or your pride forbade you to be the first to speak, I overstepped the modesty or the dissimulation of my sex; when I said,—‘Forget that I am the reputed heiress of Laughton; see in me but the faults and merits of the human being, of the wild unregulated girl; see in me but Lucretia Clavering (here her cheeks blushed, and her voice sank into a lower and more tremulous whisper), and love her if you can!’—When I went thus far, do not think I had not measured all the difficulties in the way of our union, and felt that I could surmount them.”

“But,” answered Mainwaring, hesitatingly, “can you conceive it possible that your uncle ever will consent? Is not pride—the pride of family—almost the leading attribute of his character? Did he not discard your mother—his own sister—from his house and heart, for no other offence but a second marriage, which he deemed beneath her?

Has he ever even consented to see, much less to receive, your half-sister—the child of that marriage? Is not his very affection for you interwoven with his pride in you, with his belief in your ambition? Has he not summoned your cousin, Mr. Vernon, for the obvious purpose of favouring a suit which he considers worthy of you, and which, if successful, will unite the two branches of his ancient house? How is it possible that he can ever hear without a scorn and indignation which would be fatal to your fortunes, that your heart has presumed to choose, in William Mainwaring, a man without ancestry or career?”

“Not without career!” interrupted Lucretia, proudly. “Do you think, if you were master of Laughton, that your career would not be more brilliant than that of you indolent luxurious coxcomb? Do you think that I could have been poor-hearted enough to love you, if I had not recognised in you energies and talents that correspond with my own ambition? For I am ambitious, as you know, and therefore my mind, as well as my heart, went with my love for you.”

“Ah, Lucretia! but can Sir Miles St. John see my future rise in my present obscurity?”

“I do not say that he can, or will; but if you love me, we can wait. Do not fear the rivalry of Mr. Vernon. I shall know how to free myself from so tame a peril. We can wait—my uncle is old—his habits preclude the chance of a much longer life—he has already had severe attacks. We are young, dear Mainwaring: what is a year or two to those who hope?”

Mainwaring's face fell, and a displeasing chill passed through his veins. Could this young creature, her uncle's petted and trusted darling, she who should be the soother of his infirmities, the prop of his age, the sincerest mourner at his grave, weigh

coldly thus the chances of his death, and point at once to the altar and the tomb!

He was saved from the embarrassment of reply by Dalibard's approach.

"More than half an hour absent," said the scholar in his own language, with a smile, and drawing out his watch, he placed it before their eyes; "do you not think that all will miss you? Do you suppose, Miss Clavering, that your uncle has not, ere this, asked for his fair niece? Come, and forestal him." He offered his arm to Lucretia as he spoke. She hesitated a moment, and then, turning to Mainwaring, held out her hand: he pressed it, though scarcely with a lover's warmth; and as she walked back to the terrace with Dalibard, the young man struck slowly into the opposite direction, and passing by a gate, over a foot-bridge, that led from the ha-ha into the park, bent his way towards a lake which gleamed below at some distance, half concealed by groves of venerable trees, rich with the prodigal boughs of summer. Meanwhile, as they passed towards the house, Dalibard, still using his native tongue, thus accosted his pupil:—

"You must pardon me if I think more of your interests than you do; and pardon me no less if I encroach on your secrets and alarm your pride. This young man—can you be guilty of the folly of more than a passing caprice for his society? of more than the amusement of playing with his vanity? Even if that be all, beware of entangling yourself in your own meshes."

"You do, in truth, offend me," said Lucretia, with calm haughtiness, "and you have not the right thus to speak to me."

"Not **the** right," repeated the Provençal, mournfully; "not the right!—then, indeed, I am mistaken in my pupil. Do you conceive that I would have lowered my pride to

remain here as a dependent, that conscious of attainments, and perhaps of abilities, that should win their way, even in exile, to distinction, I would have frittered away my life in these rustic shades, if I had not formed in you a deep and absorbing interest; in that interest I ground my right to warn and counsel you. I saw, or fancied I saw, in you a mind congenial to my own—a mind above the frivolities of your sex—a mind, in short, with the grasp and energy of a man's. You were then but a child; you are scarcely yet a woman; yet have I not given to your intellect the strong food on which the statesmen of Florence fed their pupil princes; or the noble Jesuits, the noble men who were destined to extend the secret empire of the imperishable Loyola?"

"You gave me the taste for a knowledge rare in my sex, I own," answered Lucretia, with a slight tone of regret in her voice; "and in the knowledge you have communicated I felt a charm that, at times, seems to me to be only fatal. You have confounded in my mind evil and good, or, rather, you have left both good and evil as dead ashes, as the dust and cinder of a crucible. You have made intellect the only conscience. Of late, I wish that my tutor had been a village priest?"

"Of late? since you have listened to the pastorals of that meek Corydon?"

"Dare you despise him—and for what? that he is good and honest?"

"I despise him not because he is good and honest, but because he is of the common herd of men, without aim or character. And it is for this youth that you will sacrifice your fortunes, your ambition, the station you were born to fill and have been reared to improve—this youth in whom there is nothing but the lap-dog's merit—sleekness and beauty. Ay, frown,—the frown betrays you—you love him!"

"And if I do!" said Lucretia, raising her tall form to its utmost height, and haughtily facing her inquisitor. "And if I do, what then? Is he unworthy of me? Converse with him, and you will find that the noble form conceals as high a spirit. He wants but wealth; I can give it to him. If his temper is gentle, I can prompt and guide it to fame and power. He, at least, has education, and eloquence, and mind. What has Mr. Vernon?"

"Mr. Vernon, I did not speak of him!"

Lucretia gazed hard upon the Provençal's countenance—gazed with that un pitying air of triumph with which a woman who detects a power over the heart she does not desire to conquer, exults in defeating the reasons that heart appears to her to prompt. "No," she said, in a calm voice, to which the venom of secret irony gave stinging significance—"no, you spoke not of Mr. Vernon; you thought that if I looked round—if I looked nearer—I might have a fairer choice."

"You are cruel—you are unjust," said Dalibard, falteringly. "If I once presumed for a moment, have I repeated my offence? But," he added, hurriedly, "in me—much as you appear to despise me—in me, at least, you would have risked none of the dangers that beset you if you seriously set your heart on Mainwaring."

"You think my uncle would be proud to give my hand to Monsieur Olivier Dalibard?"

"I think and I know," answered the Provençal, gravely, and disregarding the taunt, "that if you had deigned to render me—poor exile that I am!—the most enviable of men, you had still been the heiress of Laughton."

"So you have said and urged," said Lucretia, with evident curiosity

in her voice; "yet how, and by what art—wise and subtle as you are—could you have won my uncle's consent?"

"That is my secret," returned Dalibard gloomily: "and since the madness I indulged is for ever over—since I have so schooled my heart, that nothing, despite your sarcasm, save an affectionate interest which I may call paternal, rests there—let us pass from this painful subject. Oh, my dear pupil, be warned in time! know love for what it really is, in the dark and complicated history of actual life, a brief enchantment, not to be disclaimed, but not to be considered the all in all. Look round the world, contemplate all those who have married from passion—ten years afterwards, whither has the passion flown? With a few, indeed, where there is community of object and character, new excitements, new aims, and hopes, spring up; and, having first taken root in passion, the passion continues to shoot out in their fresh stems and fibres. But deceive yourself not; there is no such community between you and Mainwaring. What you call his goodness, you will learn hereafter to despise as feeble; and what in reality is your mental power, he soon, too soon, will shudder at as unwomanly and hateful."

"Hold!" cried Lucretia, tremulously. "Hold! and if he does, I shall owe his hate to you—to your lessons—to your deadly influence!"

"Lucretia, no!—the seeds were in you! Can cultivation force from the soil that which it is against the nature of the soil to bear?"

"I will pluck out the weeds! I will transform myself!"

"Child, I defy you!" said the scholar, with a smile, that gave to his face the expression his son had conveyed to it. "I have warned you, and my task is done." With that he bowed, and leaving her, was soon by

the side of Sir Miles St. John, and the baronet and his librarian a few moments after, entered the house, and sat down to chess.

But during the dialogues we have sketched, we must not suppose that Sir Miles himself had been so wholly absorbed in the sensual gratification bestowed upon Europe by the immortal Raleigh, as to neglect his guest and kinsman.

"And so, Charley Vernon, it is not the fashion to smoke in Lunnion" (thus Sir Miles pronounced the word, according to the euphuism of his youth, and which, even at that day, still lingered in courtly jargon).

"No, sir. However, to console us, we have most other vices in full force."

"I don't doubt it; they say the Prince's set exhaust life pretty quickly."

"It certainly requires the fortune of an earl and the constitution of a prize-fighter, to live with him."

"Yet methinks, Master Charley, you have neither one nor the other."

"And therefore I see before me, and at no very great distance, the Bench—and a consumption!" answered Vernon, suppressing a slight yawn.

"'Tis a pity; for you had a fine estate properly managed; and, in spite of your faults, you have the heart of a true gentleman. Come, come!"—and the old man spoke with tenderness—"you are young enough yet to reform. A prudent marriage, and a good wife, will save both your health and your acres."

"If you think so highly of marriage, my dear Sir Miles, it is a wonder you did not add to your precepts the value of your example."

"Jackanapes! I had not your infirmities! I never was a spend-thrift, and I have a constitution of iron!" There was a pause. "Charles," continued Sir Miles, musingly, "there

is many an earl with a less fortune than the conjoined estates of Vernon Grange and Laughton Hall. You must already have understood me—it is my intention to leave my estates to Lucretia—it is my wish, nevertheless, to think you will not be the worse for my will. Frankly, if you can like my niece, win her; settle here while I live, put the Grange to nurse, and recruit yourself by fresh air and field-sports. Zounds, Charles, I love you, and that's the truth!—Give me your hand!"

"And a grateful heart with it, sir," said Vernon, warmly, evidently affected, as he started from his indolent position, and took the hand extended to him. "Believe me, I do not covet your wealth, nor do I envy my cousin anything so much as the first place in your regard."

"Prettily said, my boy; and I don't suspect you of insincerity. What think you, then, of my plan?"

Mr. Vernon seemed embarrassed; but, recovering himself with his usual ease, he replied archly, "Perhaps, sir, it will be of little use to know what I think of your plan; my fair cousin may have upset it already."

"Ha, sir, let me look at you—so—so!—you are not jesting. What the deuce do you mean? Gad, man, speak out!"

"Do you not think that Mr. Monderling—Mandolin—what's his name—eh!—do you not think that he is a very handsome young fellow?" said Mr. Vernon, drawing out his snuff-box, and offering it to his kinsman.

"Damn your snuff," quoth Sir Miles, in great choler, as he rejected the proffered courtesy with a vehemence that sent half the contents of the box upon the joint eyes and noses of the two canine favourites dozing at his feet. The setter started up in an agony—the spaniel wheezed and snuffled, and ran off, stopping every moment to take his head

between his paws. The old gentleman continued, without heeding the sufferings of his dumb friends—a symptom of rare discomposure on his part:

“Do you mean to insinuate, Mr. Vernon, that my niece—my elder niece, Lucretia Clavering—condescends to notice the looks, good or bad, of Mr. Mainwaring? ‘Sdeath, sir, he is the son of a land agent’ Sir, he is intended for trade! Sir, his highest ambition is to be partner in some fifth-rate mercantile house!”

“My dear Sir Miles,” replied Mr. Vernon, as he continued to brush away, with his scented handkerchief, such portions of the prince’s mixture, as his nankin inexpressibles had diverted from the sensual organs of Dash and Ponto—“my dear Sir Miles, *ça n’empêche pas le sentiment!*”

“*Empêche* the fiddlestick! You don’t know Lucretia. There are many girls, indeed, who might not be trusted near any handsome flute-playing spark, with black eyes and white teeth; but Lucretia is not one of those; she has spirit and ambition that would never stoop to a *mésalliance*; she has the mind and will of a queen—old Queen Bess, I believe.”

“That is saying much for her talents, sir; but if so, Heaven help her intended! I am duly grateful for the blessings you propose me!”

Despite his anger, the old gentleman could not help smiling.

“Why, to confess the truth, she is hard to manage; but we, men of the world, know how to govern women, I hope—much more how to break in a girl scarce out of her teens. As for this fancy of yours, it is sheer folly—Lucretia knows my mind. She has seen her mother’s fate; she has seen her sister an exile from my house—why! for no fault of hers, poor thing! but because she is the child of disgrace, and the mother’s sin is visited

on the daughter’s head. I am a good-natured man, I fancy, as men go; but I am old-fashioned enough to care for my race. If Lucretia demeaned herself to love, to encourage, that lad—why, I would strike her from my will, and put your name where I have placed hers.”

“Sir,” said Vernon, gravely, and throwing aside all affectation of manner, “this becomes serious; and I have no right even to whisper a doubt by which it now seems I might benefit. I think it imprudent, if you wish Miss Clavering to regard me impartially as a suitor to her hand, to throw her, at her age, in the way of a man far superior to myself, and to most men, in personal advantages—a man more of her own years, well educated, well mannered, with no evidence of his inferior birth in his appearance or his breeding. I have not the least ground for supposing that he has made the slightest impression on Miss Clavering, and if he has, it would be, perhaps, but a girl’s innocent and thoughtless fancy, easily shaken off by time and worldly reflection; but pardon me, if I say bluntly, that should that be so, you would be wholly unjustified in punishing, even in blaming her—it is yourself you must blame for your own carelessness, and that forgetful blindness to human nature and youthful emotions, which, I must say, is the less pardonable in one who has known the world so intimately.”

“Charles Vernon,” said the old Baronet, “give me your hand, again! I was right, at least, when I said you had the heart of a true gentleman. Drop this subject for the present. Who has just left Lucretia yonder?”

“Your *protégé*—the Frenchman.”

“Ah, *he*, at least, is not blind—go, and join Lucretia!”

Vernon bowed, emptied the remains of the Madeira into a tumbler, drank the contents at a draught, and

sauntered towards Lucretia; but she, perceiving his approach, crossed abruptly into one of the alleys that led to the other side of the house; and he was either too indifferent, or too well-bred, to force upon her the companionship which she so evidently shunned. He threw himself at length upon one of the benches in the lawn, and, leaning his head upon his hand, fell into reflections, which, had he spoken, would have shaped themselves somewhat thus into words:—

“If I must take that girl as the price of this fair heritage, shall I gain or lose? I grant that she has the finest neck and shoulders I ever saw out of marble; but far from being in love with her, she gives me a feeling like fear and aversion. Add to this, that she has evidently no kinder sentiment for me than I for her; and if she once had a heart, that young gentleman has long since coaxed it away. Pleasant auspices, these, for matrimony, to a poor invalid, who wishes at least to decline and to die in peace! Moreover, if I were rich enough to marry as I pleased—if I were what, perhaps, I ought to be, heir to Laughton—why, there is a certain sweet Mary in the world, whose eyes are softer than Lucretia Clavering’s: but that is a dream! On the other hand, if I do not win this girl, and my poor kinsman give her all or nearly all his possessions, Vernon Grange goes to the usurers, and the King will find a lodging for myself. What does it matter? I cannot live above two or three years at the most, and can only hope, therefore, that dear stout old Sir Miles may outlive me. At thirty-three I have worn out fortune and life; little pleasure could Laughton give me; brief pain the Bench. Fore Gad, the philosophy of the thing is on the whole against sour looks and the noose!” Thus deciding in the progress of his reverie, he smiled, and changed his position.

The sun had set—the twilight was over—the moon rose in splendour from amidst a thick copse of mingled beech and oak, the beams fell full on the face of the muser, and the face seemed yet paler, and the exhaustion of premature decay yet more evident by that still and melancholy light—all ruins gain dignity by the moon. This was a ruin nobler than that which painters place on their canvas—the ruin, not of stone and brick, but of humanity and spirit; the wreck of man, prematurely old, not stricken by great sorrow, not bowed by great toil, but fretted and mined away by small pleasures and poor excitements—small and poor, but daily, hourly, momentarily at their gnome-like work. Something of the gravity and the true lesson of the hour and scene, perhaps, forced itself upon a mind little given to sentiment, for Vernon rose languidly, and muttered—

“My poor mother hoped better things from me. It is well, after all, that it is broken off with Mary! Why should there be any one to weep for me? I can the better die smiling, as I have lived.”

Meanwhile, as it is necessary we should follow each of the principal characters we have introduced through the course of an evening more or less eventful in the destiny of all, we return to Mainwaring, and accompany him to the lake at the bottom of the park, which he reached as its smooth surface glistened in the last beams of the sun. He saw, as he neared the water, the fish sporting in the pellucid tide; the dragon-fly darted and hovered in the air; the tedded grass beneath his feet, gave forth the fragrance of crushed thyme and clover; the swan paused, as if slumbering on the wave; the linnet and finch sang still from the neighbouring copses; and the heavy bees were winging their way home with a drowsy murmur; all around were

images of that unspeakable peace which Nature whispers to those attuned to her music; all fitted to lull, but not to deject the spirit; images dear to the holiday of the world-worn man, to the contemplation of serene and retired age; to the boyhood of poets; to the youth of lovers. But Mainwaring's step was heavy, and his brow clouded; and Nature that evening was dumb to him. At the margin of the lake stood a solitary angler, who now (his evening's task done) was employed in leisurely disjoining his rod, and whistling with much sweetness an air from one of Isaak Walton's songs. Mainwaring reached the angler, and laid his hand on his shoulder:

"What sport, Ardworth?"

"A few large roach with the fly, and one pike with a gudgeon—a noble fellow!—look at him! He was lying under the reeds yonder; I saw his green back, and teased him into biting. A heavenly evening! I wonder you did not follow my example and escape from a set, where neither you nor I can feel very much at home, to this green banquet of Nature, in which at least no man sits below the salt-cellar. The birds are an older family than the St. Johns'; but they don't throw their pedigree in our teeth, Mainwaring."

"Nay, nay, my good friend, you wrong old Sir Miles; proud he is, no doubt, but neither you nor I have had to complain of his insolence."

"Of his insolence! certainly not—of his condescension, yes! Hang it, William, it is his very politeness that galls me. Don't you observe, that with Vernon, or Lord A——, or Lord B——, or Mr. C——, he is easy and off-hand, calls them by their names, pats them on the shoulder, rates them, and swears at them if they vex him; but with you and me and his French parasite, it is all stately decorum and punctilious

courtesy:—"Mr. Mainwaring, I am delighted to see you;" "Mr. Ardworth, as you are so near, dare I ask you to ring the bell;" "Mons. Dalibard, with the utmost deference, I venture to disagree with you." However, don't let my foolish susceptibility ruffle your pride. And you, too, have a worthy object in view, which might well detain you from roach and jack-fish. Have you stolen your interview with the superb Lucretia?"

"Yes, stolen, as you say: and, like all thieves not thoroughly hardened, I am ashamed of my gains."

"Sit down, my boy, this is a bank in ten thousand; there—that old root to lean your elbow on, this soft moss for your cushion; sit down and confess. You have something on your mind that preys on you: we are old college friends—out with it!"

"There is no resisting you, Ardworth," said Mainwaring, smiling, and drawn from his reserve and his gloom by the frank good humour of his companion: "I should like, I own, to make a clean breast of it; and perhaps I may profit by your advice. You know, in the first place, that after I left College, my father seeing me indisposed for the church, to which he had always destined me in his own heart, and for which, indeed, he had gone out of his way to maintain me at the University, gave me the choice of his own business as a surveyor and land-agent, or of entering into the mercantile profession. I chose the latter, and went to Southampton, where we have a relation in business, to be initiated into the elementary mysteries. There I became acquainted with a good clergyman and his wife, and in that house I passed a great part of my time."

"With the hope, I trust, on better consideration, of gratifying your father's ambition, and learning how to starve with gentility on a cure."

"Not much of that, I fear."

"Then the clergyman had a daughter?"

"You are nearer the mark now," said Mainwaring, colouring; "though it was not his daughter; a young lady lived in his family, not even related to him; she was placed there with a certain allowance by a rich relation. In a word, I admired, perhaps I loved this young person; but she was without an independence, and I not yet provided even with the substitute of money, a profession. I fancied (do not laugh at my vanity) that my feelings might be returned. I was in alarm for her as well as myself; I sounded the clergyman as to the chance of obtaining the consent of her rich relation, and was informed that he thought it hopeless. I felt I had no right to invite her to poverty and ruin, and still less to entangle further (if I had chanced to touch at all) her affection. I made an excuse to my father to leave the town, and returned home."

"Prudent and honourable enough, so far; unlike me, I should have run off with the girl, if she loved me, and old Plutus, the rascal, might have done his worst against Cupid. But I interrupt you."

"I came back when the county was greatly agitated: public meetings, speeches, mobs—a sharp election going on. My father had always taken keen interest in politics; he was of the same party as Sir Miles, who, you know, is red-hot upon politics. I was easily led—partly by ambition, partly by the effect of example, partly by the hope to give a new turn to my thoughts—to make an appearance in public."

"And a devilish creditable one, too. Why, man, your speeches have been quoted with rapture by the London papers. Horridly aristocratic and Pittish, it is true;—I think differently; but every man to his taste. Well——"

"My attempts, such as they were, procured me the favour of Sir Miles. He had long been acquainted with my father, who had helped him in his own elections years ago. He seemed cordially delighted to patronise the son; he invited me to visit him at Laughton, and hinted to my father that I was formed for something better than a counting-house: my poor father was intoxicated. In a word, here I am—here, often for days, almost weeks together, have I been,—a guest, always welcomed."

"You pause. This is the primordial—now comes the confession, eh?"

"Why one half the confession is over. It was my most unmerited fortune to attract the notice of Miss Clavering. Do not fancy me so self-conceited as to imagine that I should ever have presumed so high, but for——"

"But for encouragement—I understand! Well, she is a magnificent creature in her way; and I do not wonder that she drove the poor little girl at Southampton out of your thoughts."

"Ah! but there is the sore—I am not sure that she has done so. Ardworth, I may trust you?"

"With everything but half-a-guinea. I would not promise to be rock against so great a temptation;" and Ardworth turned his empty pockets inside out.

"Tush—be serious!—or I go."

"Serious! With pockets like these, the devil's in it if I am not serious. *Perge, precor.*"

"Ardworth, then," said Mainwaring, with great emotion, "I confide to you the secret trouble of my heart. This girl at Southampton is Lucretia's sister—her half-sister: the rich relation on whose allowance she lives is Sir Miles St. John."

"Whew!—my own poor dear little cousin, by the father's side! Main-

wareing, I trust you have not deceived me; you have not amused yourself with breaking Susan's heart—for a heart, and an honest, simple, English girl's heart, she has."

"Heaven forbid!—I tell you I have never even declared my love—and if love it were, I trust it is over. But when Sir Miles was first kind to me, first invited me, I own I had the hope to win his esteem, and since he had always made so strong and cruel a distinction between Lucretia and Susan, I thought it not impossible that he might consent at last to my union with the niece he had refused to receive and acknowledge. But even while the hope was in me, I was drawn on—I was entangled—I was spell-bound—I know not how or why; but, to close my confidence, while still doubtful whether my own heart is free from the remembrance of the one sister, I am pledged to the other."

Ardworth looked down gravely and remained silent. He was a joyous, careless, reckless youth, with unsteady character and pursuits—and with something of vague poetry, much of unaccommodating pride about his nature—one of those youths little likely to do what is called well in the world—not persevering enough for an independent career—too blunt and honest for a servile one. But it was in the very disposition of such a person to judge somewhat harshly of Mainwaring's disclosure, and not easily to comprehend what, after all, was very natural—how a young man, new to life, timid by character, and of an extreme susceptibility to the fear of giving pain, had, in the surprise, the gratitude, the emotion, of an avowed attachment from a girl, far above him in worldly position, been forced by receiving, to seem, at least, to return her affection. And indeed, though not wholly insensib

lucient prospects opened to him in such a connection, yet, to do him justice, Mainwaring would have been equally entangled, by a similar avowal, from a girl more his equal in the world. It was rather from an amiability bordering upon weakness, than from any more degrading moral imperfections, that he had been betrayed into a position which neither contented his heart, nor satisfied his conscience.

With far less ability than his friend, Ardworth had more force and steadiness in his nature, and was wholly free from that morbid delicacy of temperament to which susceptible and shy persons owe much of their errors and misfortunes. He said, therefore, after a long pause, "My good fellow, to be plain with you, I cannot say that your confession has improved you in my estimation; but that is perhaps because of the bluntness of my understanding. I could quite comprehend your forgetting Susan (and, after all, I am left in doubt as to the extent of her conquest over you), for the very different charms of her sister. On the other hand, I could still better understand, that having once fancied Susan, you could not be commanded into love for Lucretia. But I do not comprehend your feeling love for one, and making love to the other—which is the long and short of the business."

"That is not exactly the true statement," answered Mainwaring, with a powerful effort at composure. "There are moments when, listening to Lucretia, when charmed by that softness which, contrasting the rest of her character, she exhibits to none but me, struck by her great mental powers, proud of an unsought triumph over such a being, I feel as if I could love none but her; then, suddenly, her mood changes—she utters sentiments that chill and revolt me—the beauty seems vanished from her

face. I recall, with a sigh, the simple sweetness of Susan, and I feel as if I deceived both my mistress and myself. Perhaps, however, all the circumstances of this connection tend to increase my doubts. It is humiliating to me to know that I woo clandestinely and upon sufferance, that I am stealing, as it were, into a fortune, that I am eating Sir Miles's bread, and yet counting upon his death; and this shame in myself may make me unconsciously unjust to Lucretia. But it is useless to reprove me for what is past; and though I at first imagined you could advise me for the future, I now see, too clearly, that no advice could avail."

"I grant that, too—for all you require, is to make up your mind to be fairly off with the old love, or fairly on with the new. However, now you have stated your case thus frankly, if you permit me, I will take advantage of the strange chance of finding myself here, and watch, ponder, and counsel, if I can. This Lucretia, I own it, puzzles and perplexes me; but, though no *Oedipus*, I will not take fright at the *Sphinx*. I suppose now it is time to return. They expect some of the neighbours to drink tea, and I must doff my fishing-jacket. Come!"

As they strolled towards the house, Ardworth broke a silence which had lasted for some moments:

"And how is that dear good Fielden? I ought to have guessed him at once, when you spoke of your clergyman and his young charge; but I did not know he was at Southampton."

"He has exchanged his living for a year, on account of his wife's health, and rather, I think also, with the wish to bring poor Susan nearer to Laughton, in the chance of her uncle seeing her. But you are, then, acquainted with Fielden?"

"Acquainted!—my best friend.

He was my tutor, and prepared me for Caius College. I owe him not only the little learning I have, but the little good that is left in me. I owe to him apparently, also, whatever chance of bettering my prospects may arise from my visit at Laughton."

"Notwithstanding our intimacy, we have, like most young men not related, spoken so little of our family matters, that I do not now understand how you are cousin to Susan; nor what, to my surprise and delight, brought you hither three days ago."

"Faith, my story is easier to explain than your own, William! Here goes!"

But as Ardworth's recital partially involves references to family matters, not yet sufficiently known to the reader, we must be pardoned if we assume to ourselves his task of narrator, and necessarily enlarge on his details.

The branch of the illustrious family of St. John, represented by Sir Miles diverged from the parent stem of the Lords of Bletschoe. With them it placed at the summit of its pedigree the name of William de St. John, the Conqueror's favourite and trusted warrior, and Oliva de Filgiers. With them it blazoned the latter alliance, which gave to Sir Oliver St. John the lands of Bletschoe by the hand of Margaret Beauchamp, (by her second marriage with the Duke of Somerset, grandmother to Henry VII.) In the following generation, the younger son of a younger son had founded, partly by offices of state, partly by marriage with a wealthy heiress, a house of his own; and in the reign of James the First, the St. Johns of Laughton ranked amongst the chief gentlemen of Hampshire. From that time till the accession of George III., the family, though it remained untitled, had added to its consequence by intermarriages of considerable dignity, chosen, indeed, with a disregard for

money uncommon amongst the English aristocracy, so that the estate was but little enlarged since the reign of James, though profiting, of course, by improved cultivation and the different value of money. On the other hand, perhaps there were scarcely ten families in the country who could boast of a similar directness of descent on all sides, from the proudest and noblest aristocracy of the soil: and Sir Miles St. John, by blood, was, almost at the distance of eight centuries, as pure a Norman as his ancestral William. His grandfather, nevertheless, had deviated from the usual disinterested practice of the family, and had married an heiress, who brought the quarterings of Vernon to the crowded escutcheon, and with these quarterings an estate of some £4000 a year, popularly known by the name of Vernon Grange. This rare occurrence did not add to the domestic happiness of the contracting parties, nor did it lead to the ultimate increase of the Laughton possessions. Two sons were born. To the elder was destined the father's inheritance—to the younger the maternal property. One house is not large enough for two heirs. Nothing could exceed the pride of the father as a St. John, except the pride of the mother as a Vernon. Jealousies between the two sons began early, and rankled deep; nor was there peace at Laughton till the younger had carried away from its rental the lands of Vernon Grange; and the elder remained just where his predecessors stood in point of possessions—sole lord of Laughton sole. The elder son, Sir Miles's father, had been, indeed, so chafed by the rivalry with his brother, that in disgust he had run away, and thrown himself, at the age of fourteen, into the navy. By accident or by merit he rose high in that profession, acquired name and fame, and lost an eye and an arm,—

for which he was gazetted, at the same time, an admiral and a baronet.

Thus mutilated and dignified, Sir George St John retired from the profession; and finding himself unmarried, and haunted by the apprehension that if he died childless, Laughton would pass to his brother's heirs, he resolved upon consigning his remains to the nuptial couch, previous to the surer peace of the family vault. At the age of fifty-nine, the grim veteran succeeded in finding a young lady of unblemished descent, and much marked with the small-pox, who consented to accept the only hand which Sir George had to offer. From this marriage sprang a numerous family; but all died in early childhood, frightened to death, said the neighbours, by their tender parents (considered the ugliest couple in the county), except one boy (the present Sir Miles) and one daughter, many years younger, destined to become Lucretia's mother. Sir Miles came early into his property; and although the softening advance of civilisation, with the liberal effects of travel, and a long residence in cities, took from him that provincial austerity of pride, which is only seen in stanch perfection amongst the lords of a village, he was yet little less susceptible to the duties of maintaining his lineage pure as its representation had descended to him, than the most superb of his predecessors. But owing, it was said, to an early disappointment, he led, during youth and manhood, a roving and desultory life, and so put off from year to year the grand experiment matrimonial, until he arrived at old age, with the philosophical determination to select from the other branches of his house the successor to the heritage of St. John. In this arrogating to himself a right to neglect his proper duties as head of a family, he found his excuse in adopting his niece Lucretia. His sister had chosen

for her first husband a friend and neighbour of his own, a younger son, of unexceptionable birth, and of very agreeable manners in society. But this gentleman contrived to render her life so miserable, that, though he died fifteen months after their marriage, his widow could scarcely be expected to mourn long for him. A year after Mr. Clavering's death, Mrs. Clavering married again, under the mistaken notion that she had the right to choose for herself. She married Dr. Mivers, the provincial physician who had attended her husband in his last illness—a gentleman by education, manners, and profession, but unhappily the son of a silk-mercator. Sir Miles never forgave this connection. By her first marriage, Sir Miles's sister had one daughter, Lucretia; by her second marriage, another daughter, named Susan. She survived somewhat more than a year the birth of the latter: on her death, Sir Miles formally (through his agent) applied to Dr. Mivers for his eldest niece, Lucretia Clavering, and the physician did not think himself justified in withholding from her the probable advantages of a transfer from his own roof to that of her wealthy uncle. He himself had been no worldly gainer by his connection; his practice had suffered materially from the sympathy which was felt by the county families for the supposed wrongs of Sir Miles St. John, who was personally not only popular, but esteemed, nor less so on account of his pride: too dignified to refer even to his domestic annoyances, except to his most familiar associates—to them, indeed, Sir Miles had said briefly, that he considered a physician who abused his entrance into a noble family by stealing into its alliance, was a character in whose punishment all society had an interest. The words were repeated; they were thought inst. Those who ventured to suggest that Mrs. Clavering, as a

widow, was a free agent, were regarded with suspicion. It was the time when French principles were just beginning to be held in horror, especially in the provinces, and when everything that encroached upon the rights and prejudices of the high-born was called "a French principle." Dr. Mivers was as much scouted as if he had been a *sans-culotte*. Obligated to quit the county, he settled at a distance; but he had a career to commence again; his wife's death enfeebled his spirits, and damped his exertions. He did little more than earn a bare subsistence, and died at last, when his only daughter was fourteen, poor and embarrassed. On his death bed he wrote a letter to Sir Miles, reminding him that, after all, Susan was his sister's child, gently vindicating himself from the unmerited charge of treachery which had blasted his fortunes, and left his orphan penniless; and closing with a touching, yet a manly appeal to the sole relative left to befriend her. The clergyman who had attended him in his dying moments took charge of this letter; he brought it in person to Loughton, and delivered it to Sir Miles. Whatever his errors, the old baronet was no common man. He was not vindictive, though he could not be called forgiving. He had considered his conduct to his sister a duty owed to his name and ancestors; she had placed herself and her youngest child out of the pale of his family. He would not receive as his niece the granddaughter of a silk-mercator. The relationship was extinct, as, in certain countries, nobility is forfeited by a union with an inferior class. But, niece or not, here was a claim to humanity and benevolence; and never yet had appeal been made by suffering to his heart and purse in vain.

He bowed his head over the letter as his eye came to the last line, and

remained silent so long, that the clergyman, at last, moved and hopeful, approached and took his hand. It was the impulse of a good man and a good priest. Sir Miles looked up in surprise; but the calm pitying face bent on him, repelled all return of pride.

"Sir," he said, tremulously, and he pressed the hand that grasped his own, "I thank you. I am not fit at this moment to decide what to do: to-morrow, you shall know. And the man died poor? not in want, not in want?"

"Comfort yourself, worthy sir; he had, at the last, all that sickness and death require, except one assurance, which I ventured to whisper to him—I trust not too rashly—that his daughter would not be left unprotected. And I pray you to reflect, my dear sir, that ——"

Sir Miles did not wait for the conclusion of the sentence; he rose abruptly, and left the room. Mr. Fielden (so the good priest was named) felt confident of the success of his mission; but, to win it the more support, he sought Lucretia. She was then seventeen: it is an age when the heart is peculiarly open to the household ties—to the memory of a mother—to the sweet name of sister. He sought this girl, he told his tale, and pleaded the sister's cause. Lucretia heard in silence; neither eye nor lip betrayed emotion; but her colour went and came. This was the only sign that she was moved; moved, but how? Fielden's experience in the human heart could not guess. When he had done, she went quietly to her desk (it was in her own room that the conference took place)—she unlocked it with a deliberate hand—she took from it a pocket-book and a case of jewels, which Sir Miles had given her on her last birthday. "Let my sister have these—while I live she shall not want!"

"My dear young lady, it is not these things that she asks from you; it is your affection, your sisterly heart, your intercession with her natural protector; these, in her name, I ask for—*non gemmis neque purpura renale, nec auro!*"

Lucretia then, still without apparent emotion, raised to the good man's face, deep, penetrating, but unrevealing eyes, and said slowly:—

"Is my sister like my mother, who, they say, was handsome?"

Much startled by this question, Fielden answered—"I never saw your mother, my dear; but your sister gives promise of more than common comeliness."

Lucretia's brows grew slightly compressed. "And her education has been, of course, neglected?"

"Certainly, in some points—mathematics, for instance, and theology. But she knows what ladies generally know—French and Italian, and such like. Dr. Mivers was not unlearned in the polite letters. Oh, trust me, my dear young lady, she will not disgrace your family; she will justify your uncle's favour. Plead for her!"—and the good man clasped his hands.

Lucretia's eyes fell musingly on the ground; but she resumed, after a short pause.

"What does my uncle himself say?"

"Only that he will decide to-morrow."

"I will see him;" and Lucretia left the room as for that object. But when she had gained the stairs, she paused at the large embayed case-moment, which formed a niche in the landing-place, and gazed over the broad domains beyond; a stern smile settled, then, upon her lips; the smile seemed to say—"In this inheritance I will have no rival."

Lucretia's influence with Sir Miles was great; but here it was not

needed. Before she saw him he had decided on his course. Her precocious, and apparently intuitive knowledge of character, detected, at a glance, the safety with which she might intercede. She did so, and was chid into silence.

The next morning, Sir Miles took the priest's arm, and walked with him into the gardens.

"Mr. Fielden," he said, with the air of a man who has chosen his course, and deprecates all attempt to make him swerve from it, "if I followed my own selfish wishes, I should take home this poor child. Stay, sir, and hear me—I am no hypocrite, and I speak honestly—I like young faces—I have no family of my own:—I love Lucretia, and I am proud of her, but a girl brought up in adversity might be a better nurse, and a more docile companion—let that pass. I have reflected, and I feel that I cannot set to Lucretia—set to children unborn—the example of indifference to a name degraded and a race adulterated: you may call this pride, or prejudice—I view it differently. There are duties due from an individual, duties due from a nation, duties due from a family; as my ancestors thought, so think I. They left me the charge of their name, as the fiercest by which I hold their lands. 'Sdeath, sir! pardon me the expletive!—I was about to say, that if I am now a childless old man, it is because I have myself known temptation, and resisted. I loved, and denied myself what I believed my best chance of happiness, because the object of my attachment was not my equal—that was a bitter struggle—I triumphed, and I rejoice at it, though the result was to leave all thoughts of wedlock elsewhere odious and repugnant. These principles of action have made a part of my creed as gentleman, if not as Christian—now, to the point. I beseech you to find a fitting

and reputable home for Miss—Miss Mivers (the lip slightly curled as the name was said)—I shall provide suitably for her maintenance. When she marries, I will dower her, provided only, and always, that her choice fall upon one who will not still further degrade her lineage on her mother's side,—in a word, if she select a *gentleman*. Mr. Fielden, on this subject I have no more to say."

In vain the good clergyman, whose very conscience, as well as reason, was shocked by the deliberate and argumentative manner with which the baronet had treated the abandonment of his sister's child as an absolutely moral, almost religious duty,—in vain he exerted himself to repel such sophisms, and put the matter in its true light. It was easy for him to move Sir Miles's heart—that was ever gentle—that was moved already; but the crochets in his head was impregnable. The more touchingly he painted poor Susan's unfriended youth, her sweet character, and promising virtues, the more Sir Miles St. John considered himself a martyr to his principles, and the more obstinate in the martyrdom he became. "Poor thing! poor child!" he said often, and brushed a tear from his eyes; "a thousand pities! Well, well, I hope she will be happy! Mind, money shall never stand in the way if she have a suitable offer!" This was all the worthy clergyman, after an hour's eloquence, could extract from him. Out of breath, and out of patience, he gave in at last; and the baronet, still holding his reluctant arm, led him back towards the house. After a prolonged pause, Sir Miles said abruptly: "I have been thinking that I may have unwittingly injured this man—this Mivers—while I deemed only that he injured me. As to reparation to his daughter, that is settled; and, after all, though I do

not publicly acknowledge her, she is half my own niece."

"Half?"

"Half—the father's side don't count, of course; and, rigidly speaking, the relationship is, perhaps, forfeited on the other. However, that half of it I grant. Zooks, sir, I say I grant it!—I beg you ten thousand pardons for my vehemence. To return, perhaps I can show at least that I bear no malice to this poor doctor. He has relations of his own—silk-mercers—trade has reverses. How are they off?"

Perfectly perplexed by this very contradictory and paradoxical, yet, to one better acquainted with Sir Miles, very characteristic benevolence, Fielden was some time before he answered. "Those members of Dr. Mivers's family who are in trade are sufficiently prosperous; they have paid his debts; *they*, Sir Miles, will receive his daughter."

"By no means!" cried Sir Miles, quickly; then recovering himself, he added, "or, if you think that advisable, of course all interference on my part is withdrawn."

"*Festina lente!*—not so quick, Sir Miles. I do not yet say that it is advisable—not because they are silk-mercers, the which, I humbly conceive, is no sin to exclude them from gratitude for their proffered kindness, but because Susan, poor child! having been brought up in different habits, may feel a little strange, at least at first, with ——"

"Strange, yes; I should hope so!" interrupted Sir Miles, taking snuff with much energy; "and, by the way, I am thinking that it would be well if you and Mrs. Fielden—you are married, sir?—that is right—clergymen all marry!—if you and Mrs. Fielden would take charge of her yourselves, it would be a great comfort to me to think her so well placed. We differ, sir—but I respect

you. Think of this. Well, then, the doctor has left no relations that I can aid in any way."

"Strange man!" muttered Fielden. "Yes; I must not let one poor youth lose the opportunity offered by your—your ——"

"Never mind what—proceed—one poor youth; in the shop, of course?"

"No; and by his father's side (since you so esteem such vanities) of an ancient family—a sister of Dr. Mivers married Captain Ardworth."

"Ardworth—a goodish name—Ardworth, of Yorkshire."

"Yes, of that family. It was, of course, an imprudent marriage, contracted while he was only an ensign. His family did not reject him, Sir Miles."

"Sir, Ardworth is a good squire's family, but the name is Saxon; there is no difference in race between the head of the Ardworths, if he were a duke, and my gardener, John Hodge—Saxon and Saxon, both. *His* family did not reject him—go on."

"But he was a younger son in a large family—both himself and his wife have known all the distresses common, they tell me, to the poverty of a soldier, who has no resource but his pay. They have a son; Dr. Mivers—though so poor himself—took this boy, for he loved his sister dearly, and meant to bring him up to his own profession. Death frustrated this intention. The boy is high-spirited and deserving."

"Let his education be completed—send him to the university; and I will see that he is put into some career, of which his father's family would approve. You need not mention to any one my intentions in this respect, not even to the lad. And now, Mr. Fielden, I have done my duty—at least, I think so. The longer you honour my house, the more I shall be pleased and grateful; but this topic, allow me most respect-

fully to say, needs and bears no further comment. Have you seen the last news from the army?"

"The army!—oh, fie, Sir Miles, I must speak one word more—may not my poor Susan have, at least, the comfort to embrace her sister?"

Sir Miles mused a moment, and struck his crutch-stick thrice firmly on the ground.

"I see no great objection to that; but, by the address of this letter, the poor girl is too far from Laughton to send Lucretia to her."

"I can obviate that objection, Sir Miles. It is my wish to continue to Susan her present home amongst my own children—my wife loves her dearly; and had you consented to give her the shelter of your own roof, I am sure I should not have seen a smile in the house for a month after. If you permit this plan, as indeed you honoured me by suggesting it, I can pass through Southampton, on my way to my own living in Devonshire, and Miss Clavering can visit her sister there."

"Let it be so," said Sir Miles, briefly; and so the conversation closed.

Some weeks afterwards, Lucretia went in her uncle's carriage, with four post-horses, with her maid and her footman—went in the state and pomp of heiress to Laughton—to the small lodging-house in which the kind pastor crowded his children and his young guest. She stayed there some days. She did not weep when she embraced Susan—she did not weep when she took leave of her; but she showed no want of actual kindness, though the kindness was formal and stately. On her return, Sir Miles forbore to question; but he looked as if he expected, and would willingly permit, her to speak on what might naturally be uppermost at her heart. Lucretia, however, remained silent, till at last the baronet colouring, as if ashamed of his curiosity, said—

"Is your sister like your mother?"

"You forget, sir, I can have no recollection of my mother."

"Your mother had a strong family likeness to myself."

"She is not like you—they say she is like Dr. Mivers."

"Oh!" said the baronet, and he asked no more. The sisters did not meet again: a few letters passed between them, but the correspondence gradually ceased.

Young Ardworth went to college, prepared by Mr. Fielden, who was no ordinary scholar, and an accurate and profound mathematician—a more important requisite than classical learning in a tutor for Cambridge. But Ardworth was idle, and perhaps even dissipated. He took a common degree, and made some debts, which were paid by Sir Miles, without a murmur. A few letters then passed between the baronet and the clergyman, as to Ardworth's future destiny; the latter owned that his pupil was not persevering enough for the bar, nor steady enough for the church. These were no great faults in Sir Miles's eyes. He resolved, after an effort, to judge himself of the capacities of the young man, and so came the invitation to Laughton. Ardworth was greatly surprised when Fielden communicated to him this invitation, for hitherto he had not conceived the slightest suspicion of his benefactor—he had rather, and naturally, supposed that some relation of his father's had paid for his maintenance at the university; and he knew enough of the family history to look upon Sir Miles as the proudest of men. How was it, then, that he who would not receive the daughter of Dr. Mivers, his own niece, would invite the nephew of Dr. Mivers, who was no relation to him? However, his curiosity was excited, and Fielden was urgent that he should go;—to Laughton, therefore, had he gone.

We have now brought down, to the opening of our narrative, the general records of the family it concerns; we have reserved our account of the rearing and the character of the personage most important, perhaps, in

the development of its events—*Lucretia Clavering*; in order to place singly before the reader, the portrait of her dark, misguided, and ill-boding youth.

CHAPTER II.

LUCRETIA.

WHEN *Lucretia* first came to the house of *Sir Miles St. John*, she was an infant about four years old. The baronet then lived principally in London, with occasional visits rather to the Continent or a watering place, than to his own family mansion. He did not pay any minute attention to his little ward—satisfied that her nurse was sedulous, and her nursery airy and commodious. When at the age of seven, she began to interest him, and he himself, approaching old age, began seriously to consider, whether he should select her as his heiress, for hitherto he had not formed any decided or definite notions on the matter—he was startled by a temper so vehement, so self-willed and sternly imperious, so obstinately bent upon attaining its object, so indifferently contemptuous of warning, reproof, coaxing, or punishment, that her governess honestly came to him in despair.

The management of this unmanageable child interested *Sir Miles*. It caused him to think of *Lucretia* seriously; it caused him to have her much in his society, and always in his thoughts; the result was, that by amusing and occupying him, she forced a stronger hold on his affections than she might have done had she been more like the ordinary run of commonplace children. Of all dogs, there is no dog that so attaches

a master as a dog that snarls at everybody else,—that no other hand can venture to pat with impunity; of all horses, there is none which so flatters the rider, from *Alexander* downwards as a horse that nobody else can ride. Extend this principle to the human species, and you may understand why *Lucretia* became so dear to *Sir Miles St. John*—she got at his heart through his vanity. For though, at times, her brow darkened, and her eye flashed even at his remonstrance, she was yet no sooner in his society than she made a marked distinction between him and the subordinates, who had hitherto sought to control her. Was this affection?—he thought so. Alas, what parent can trace the workings of a child's mind—springs moved by an idle word from a nurse—a whispered conference between hirelings! Was it possible that *Lucretia* had not often been menaced, as the direst evil that could befall her, with her uncle's displeasure; that long before she could be sensible of mere worldly loss or profit, she was not impressed with a vague sense of *Sir Miles's* power over her fate; nay, when trampling, in childish wrath and scorn, upon some menial's irritable feelings, was it possible that she had not been told that, but for *Sir Miles*, she would be little better than a servant herself! Be this as it may, all weakness is prone to dissimulate;

and rare and happy is the child whose feelings are as pure and transparent as the fond parent deems them. There is something in children, too, which seems like an instinctive deference to the aristocratic appearances which sway the world. Sir Miles's stately person—his imposing dress, the respect with which he was surrounded—all tended to beget notions of superiority and power, to which it was no shame to succumb, as it was to Miss Black, the governess, whom the maids answered pertly, or Martha, the nurse, whom Miss Black snubbed if Lucretia tore her frock.

Sir Miles's affection once won—his penetration not perhaps blinded to her more evident faults, but his self-love soothed towards regarding them leniently—there was much in Lucretia's external gifts which justified the predilection of the haughty man. As a child, she was beautiful, and, perhaps, from her very imperfections of temper, her beauty had that air of distinction which the love of command is apt to confer. If Sir Miles was with his friends when Lucretia swept into the room, he was pleased to hear them call her their little "princess," and pleased yet more at a certain dignified tranquillity with which she received their caresses or their toys, and which he regarded as the sign of a superior mind: nor was it long, indeed, before what we call a superior mind developed itself in the young Lucretia. All children are quick till they are set methodically to study; but Lucretia's quickness defied even that numbing ordeal, by which half of us are rendered dunces. Rapidity and precision in all the tasks set to her,—in the comprehension of all the explanations given to her questions, evinced singular powers of readiness and reasoning.

As she grew older, she became more reserved and thoughtful. Seeing but few children of her own age, and

mixing intimately with none, her mind was debarred from the usual objects which distract the vivacity, the restless and wondrous observation, of childhood. She came in and out of Sir Miles's library of a morning, or his drawing room of an evening till her hour for rest, with unquestioned and sometimes unnoticed freedom; she listened to the conversation around her, and formed her own conclusions unchecked. It has a great influence upon a child, whether for good or for evil, to mix early and habitually with those grown up—for good to the mere intellect always—the evil depends upon the character and discretion of those the child sees and hears—"Reverence the greatest is due to children," exclaims the wisest of the Romans;* that is to say that we must revere the candour and inexperience and innocence of their minds.

Now Sir Miles's habitual associates were persons of the world; well-bred and decorous, indeed, before children, as the best of the old school were—avoiding all anecdotes, all allusions, for which the prudent matron would send her girls out of the room; but, with that reserve, speaking of the world as the world goes; if talking of young A—, calculating carelessly what he would have when old A—, his father, died—naturally giving to wealth, and station, and ability, their fixed importance in life—not over-apt to single out for eulogium some quiet goodness, rather inclined to speak with irony of pretensions to virtue—rarely speaking but with respect of the worldly seemings which rule mankind;—all these had their inevitable effect upon that keen, quick, yet moody and reflective intellect.

Sir Miles removed at last to Laughton. He gave up London—why, he acknowledged not to himself; but it was because he had outlived

* Cicero. The sentiment is borrowed by Juvenal.

his age—most of his old set were gone—new hours, new habits had stolen in. He had ceased to be of importance as a marrying man, as a personage of fashion; his health was impaired; he shrank from the fatigues of a contested election; he resigned his seat in Parliament for his native county, and, once settled at Laughton, the life there soothed and flattered him—there, all his former claims to distinction were still fresh. He amused himself by collecting, in his old halls and chambers, his statues and pictures, and felt that, without fatigue or trouble, he was a greater man at Laughton in his old age, than he had been in London during his youth.

Lucretia was then thirteen. Three years afterwards, Olivier Dalibard was established in the house, and from that time a great change became noticeable in her. The irregular vehemence of her temper gradually subsided, and was replaced by an habitual self-command, which rendered the rare deviations from it more effective and imposing. Her pride changed its character wholly and permanently; no word, no look of scorn to the low-born and the poor escaped her. The masculine studies which her erudite tutor opened to a grasping and inquisitive mind, elevated her very errors above the petty distinctions of class. She imbibed earnestly what Dalibard assumed or felt,—the more dangerous pride of the fallen angel,—and set up the intellect as a deity. All belonging to the mere study of mind charmed and enchained her; but active and practical in her very reveries, if she brooded, it was to scheme, to plot, to weave web and mesh, and to smile in haughty triumph at her own ingenuity and daring. The first lesson of mere worldly wisdom teaches us to command temper; it was worldly wisdom that made the once impetuous girl

calm, tranquil, and serene. Sir Miles was pleased by a change that removed from Lucretia's outward character its chief blot; perhaps, as his frame declined, he sighed sometimes to think that with so much majesty there appeared but little tenderness; he took, however, the merits with the faults, and was content upon the whole.

If the Provençal had taken more than common pains with his young pupil, the pains were not solely disinterested. In plunging her mind amidst that profound corruption which belongs only to intellect cultivated in scorn of good, and in suppression of heart, he had his own views to serve. He watched the age when the passions ripen; and he grasped at the fruit which his training sought to mature. In the human heart ill regulated there is a dark desire for the forbidden. This Lucretia felt—this her studies cherished, and her thoughts brooded over. She detected, with the quickness of her sex, the Preceptor's stealthy aim. She started not at the danger. Proud of her mastery over herself, she rather triumphed in luring on into weakness this master-intelligence which had lighted up her own,—to see her slave in her teacher—to despise or to pity him whom she had first contemplated with awe. And with this mere pride of the understanding might be connected that of the sex; she had attained the years when woman is curious to know and to sound her power. To inflame Dalibard's cupidity or ambition was easy; but to touch his *heart*—that marble heart!—this had its dignity and its charm. Strange to say, she succeeded. The passion, as well as interests, of this dangerous and able man became enlisted in his hopes; and now the game played between them had a terror in its suspense; for if Dalibard penetrated not into the recesses of his pupil's

complicated nature, she was far from having yet sounded the hell that lay black and devouring beneath his own. Not through her affections—those he scarce hoped for—but through her inexperience, her vanity, her passions, he contemplated the path to his victory over her soul and her fate. And so resolute, so wily, so unscrupulous was this person who had played upon all the subtlest keys and chords in the scale of turbulent life, that, despite the lofty smile with which Lucretia at length heard and repelled his suit, he had no fear of the ultimate issue,—when all his projects were traversed,—all his mines and stratagems abruptly brought to a close, by an event which he had wholly unforeseen—the appearance of a rival; the ardent and almost purifying love, which, escaping awhile from all the demons he had evoked, she had, with a girl's frank heart and impulse, conceived for Mainwaring. And here, indeed, was the great crisis in Lucretia's life and destiny. So interwoven with her nature had become the hard calculations of the understanding; so habitual to her now was the zest for scheming, which revels in the play and vivacity of intrigue and plot, and which Shakspeare has, perhaps, intended chiefly to depict in the villany of Iago, that it is probable Lucretia could never become a character thoroughly amiable and honest. But with a happy and well-placed love, her ambition might have had legitimate vents; her restless energies, the woman's natural field in sympathies for another. The heart once opened softens by use: gradually and unconsciously the interchange of affection, the companionship with an upright and ingenuous mind (for virtue is not only beautiful; it is contagious) might have had their redeeming and hallowing influence. Happier, indeed, had it been, if her choice had fallen upon a more com-

manding and lofty nature. But perhaps it was the very meekness and susceptibility of Mainwaring's temper, relieved from feebleness by his talents, which, once in play, were undeniably great, that pleased her by contrast with her own hardness of spirit and despotism of will.

That Sir Miles should have been blind to the position of the lovers, is less disparaging to his penetration than it may appear: for the very imprudence with which Lucretia abandoned herself to the society of Mainwaring during his visits at Laughton, took a resemblance to candour. Sir Miles knew his niece to be more than commonly clever and well informed; that she, like him, should feel that the conversation of a superior young man was a relief to the ordinary babble of their country neighbours, was natural enough; and if now and then a doubt, a fear, had crossed his mind, and rendered him more touched than he liked to own by Vernon's remarks, it had vanished upon perceiving that Lucretia never seemed a shade more pensive in Mainwaring's absence. The listlessness and the melancholy which are apt to accompany love, especially where unpropitiously placed, were not visible on the surface of this strong nature. In truth, once assured that Mainwaring returned her affection, Lucretia reposed on the future with a calm and resolute confidence; and her customary dissimulation closed like an unruffled sea over all the under-currents that met and played below. Still Sir Miles's attention once, however slightly, aroused to the recollection that Lucretia was at the age when woman naturally meditates upon love and marriage, had suggested, afresh and more vividly, a project which had before been indistinctly conceived—viz., the union of the divided branches of his house, by the marriage of the last male of the

Vernons with the heiress of the St. Johns. Sir Miles had seen much of Vernon himself, at various intervals: he had been present at his christening, though he had refused to be his godfather, for fear of raising undue expectations; he had visited and munificently "tipped" him at Eton; he had accompanied him to his quarters when he joined the Prince's regiment; he had come often in contact with him, when, at the death of his father, Vernon retired from the army and blazed in the front ranks of metropolitan fashion; he had given him counsel and had even lent him money. Vernon's spendthrift habits, and dissipated if not dissolute life, had certainly confirmed the old baronet in his intentions to trust the lands of Laughton to the lesser risk which property incurs in the hands of a female, if tightly settled on her, than in the more colossal and multiform luxuries of an expensive man; and to do him justice, during the flush of Vernon's riotous career, he had shrunk from the thought of confiding the happiness of his niece to so unstable a partner. But of late, whether from his impaired health, or his broken fortunes, Vernon's follies had been less glaring. He had now arrived at the mature age of thirty-three, when wild oats may reasonably be sown. The composed and steadfast character of Lucretia, might serve to guide and direct him: and Sir Miles was one of those who hold the doctrine that a reformed rake makes the best husband; add to this, there was nothing in Vernon's reputation (once allowing that his thirst for pleasure was slaked) which could excite serious apprehensions. Through all his difficulties, he had maintained his honour unblemished; a thousand traits of amiability and kindness of heart made him popular and beloved. He was nobody's enemy but his own.

His very distresses—the prospect of his ruin, if left unassisted by Sir Miles's testamentary dispositions—were arguments in his favour. And, after all, though Lucretia was a nearer relation, Vernon was in truth the direct male heir, and, according to the usual prejudices of family, therefore, the fitter representative of the ancient line. With these feelings and views, he had invited Vernon to his house, and we have seen already that his favourable impressions had been confirmed by the visit.

And here, we must say, that Vernon himself had been brought up in boyhood and youth to regard himself the presumptive inheritor of Laughton. It had been, from time immemorial, the custom of the St. Johns to pass by the claims of females in the settlement of the entails: from male to male the estate had gone—furnishing warriors to the army, and senators to the state. And if when Lucretia first came to Sir Miles's house, the bright prospect seemed somewhat obscured, still the *mésalliance* of the mother, and Sir Miles's obstinate resentment thereat, seemed to warrant the supposition that he would probably only leave to the orphan the usual portion of a daughter of the house, and that the lands would go in their ordinary destination. This belief, adopted passively, and as a thing of course, had had a very prejudicial effect upon Vernon's career. What mattered that he over-enjoyed his youth, that the subordinate property of the Vernons, a paltry four or five thousand pounds a year, went a little too fast—the splendid estates of Laughton would recover all. From this dream he had only been awakened two or three years before, by an attachment he had formed to the portionless daughter of an earl; and the Grange being too far encumbered to allow him the proper settlements which the lady's family required,

it became a matter of importance to ascertain Sir Miles's intentions. Too delicate himself to sound them, he had prevailed upon the earl, who was well acquainted with Sir Miles, to take Laughton in his way to his own seat in Dorsetshire, and, without betraying the grounds of his interest in the question, learn carelessly, as it were, the views of the wealthy man. The result had been a severe and terrible disappointment. Sir Miles had then fully determined upon constituting Lucretia his heiress, and, with the usual openness of his character, he had plainly said so, upon the very first covert and polished allusion to the subject, which the earl slyly made. This discovery, in breaking off all hopes of an union with Lady Mary Stanville, had crushed more than mercenary expectations. It affected, through his heart, Vernon's health and spirits; it rankled deep and was resented at first as a fatal injury. But Vernon's native nobility of disposition gradually softened an indignation which his reason convinced him was groundless and unjust. Sir Miles had never encouraged the expectations, which Vernon's family and himself had unthinkingly formed. The baronet was master of his own fortune, and after all was it not more natural that he should prefer the child he had brought up and reared, to a distant relation, little more than an acquaintance, simply because man succeeded to man in the mouldy pedigree of the St. Johns? And, Mary fairly lost to him, his constitutional indifference to money, a certain French levity of temper, a persuasion that his life was nearing its wasted close, had left him without regret, as without resentment, at his kinsman's decision. His boyish affection for the hearty, generous old gentleman returned, and though he abhorred the country, he had without a single interested thought or calcu-

lation, cordially accepted the baronet's hospitable overtures, and deserted, for the wilds of Hampshire, "the sweet shady side of Pall Mall."

We may now enter the drawing-room at Laughton, in which were already assembled several of the families residing in the more immediate neighbourhood, and who sociably dropped in to chat around the national tea-table, play a rubber at whist, or make up, by the help of two or three children and two or three grandpapas, a merry country dance. For, in that happy day, people were much more sociable than they are now, in the houses of our rural Thanes. Our country seats became bustling and animated after the Birthday; many even of the more important families resided, indeed, all the year round on their estates. The Continent was closed to us; the fastidious exclusiveness which comes from habitual residence in cities, had not made that demarcation in castes and in talk, between neighbour and neighbour, which exists now. Our squires were less educated, less refined, but more hospitable and unassuming. In a word, there was what does not exist now, except in some districts remote from London,—a rural society for those who sought it.

The party, as we enter, is grouped somewhat thus—but first, we must cast a glance at the room itself, which rarely failed to be the first object to attract a stranger's notice. It was a long, and not particularly well proportioned apartment, according, at least, to modern notions, for it had rather the appearance of two rooms thrown into one. At the distance of about thirty-five feet, the walls, before somewhat narrow, were met by an arch, supported by carved pilasters, which opened into a space nearly double the width of the previous part of the room, with a domed ceiling, and an ambaved window of such

depth, that the recess almost formed a chamber in itself. But both these divisions of the apartment corresponded exactly in point of decoration; they had the same small panelling, painted a very light green, which seemed almost white by candle-light, each compartment wrought with an arabesque, the same enriched frieze and cornice; they had the same high mantel-pieces, ascending to the ceiling, with the arms of St. John in bold relief. They had, too, the same old-fashioned and venerable furniture, draperies of thick figured velvet, with immense chairs and sofas to correspond, interspersed, it is true, with more modern and commodious inventions of the upholsterer's art, in grave stuffed leather, or lively chintz. Two windows, nearly as deep as that in the further division, broke the outline of the former one, and helped to give that irregular and *nooky* appearance to the apartment, which took all discomfort from its extent, and furnished all convenience for solitary study or detached flirtation. With little respect for the carved work of the panels, the walls were covered with pictures brought by Sir Miles from Italy; here and there marble busts and statues gave lightness to the character of the room, and harmonized well with that half-Italian mode of decoration which belongs to the period of James the First. The shape of the chamber, in its divisions, lent itself admirably to that friendly and sociable intermixture of amusements which reconciles the tastes of young and old. In the first division, near the fire-place, Sir Miles, seated in his easy chair, and sheltered from the opening door by a sevenfold tapestry screen, was still at chess with his librarian. At a little distance, a middle-aged gentleman, and three turbaned matrons, were cutting in at whist—*shi'* *ag* points—with a half-crown bet, optional, and not much ventured on. On tables, drawn into the recesses of the windows, were the day's newspapers, Gilray's caricatures, the last new publications, and such other ingenious suggestions to chit-chat. And round these tables grouped those who had not yet found elsewhere their evening's amusement; two or three shy young clergymen, the parish doctor, four or five squires, who felt great interest in politics, but never dreamt of the extravagance of taking in a daily paper, and who now, monopolizing all the journals they could find, began fairly with the heroic resolution to skip nothing, from the first advertisement to the printer's name. Amidst one of these groupings, Mainwaring had bashfully ensconced himself. In the further division, the chandelier, suspended from the domed ceiling, threw its cheerful light over a large circular table below, on which gleamed the ponderous tea-urn of massive silver, with its usual accompaniments. Nor were wanting there, in addition to those airy nothings, sliced infinitesimally, from a French roll, the more substantial, and now exiled cheer, of cakes—plum and seed, Yorkshire and saffron—attesting the light hand of the housekeeper, and the strong digestion of the guests. Round this table were seated, in full gossip, the maids and the matrons, with a slight sprinkling of the bolder young gentlemen who had been taught to please the fair. The warmth of the evening allowed the upper casement to be opened and the curtains drawn aside, and the July moonlight feebly struggled against the blaze of the lights within. At this table it was Miss Clavering's obvious duty to preside; but that was a complaisance to which she rarely condescended. Nevertheless, she had her own way of doing the honour of her uncle's house, which was not without courtesy and grace; to glide from one to the other,

exchange a few friendly words, see that each set had its well known amusements, and, finally, sit quietly down to converse with some who, from gravity or age, appeared most to neglect, or be neglected by the rest, was her ordinary, and not unpopular mode of welcoming the guests at Laughton—not unpopular, for she thus avoided all interference with the flirtations and conquests of humbler damsels, whom her station and her endowments might otherwise have crossed or humbled, while she ensured the good word of the old, to whom the young are seldom so attentive. But if a stranger of more than provincial repute chanced to be present, if some stray member of parliament, or barrister on the circuit, or wandering artist, accompanied any of the neighbours, to him Lucretia gave more earnest and undivided attention. Him she sought to draw into a conversation deeper than the usual babble, and with her calm, searching eyes, bent on him while he spoke, seemed to fathom the intellect she set in play. But as yet, this evening, she had not made her appearance—a sin against etiquette very unusual in her. Perhaps her recent conversation with Dalibard had absorbed her thoughts to forgetfulness of the less important demands on her attention. Her absence had not interfered with the gaiety at the tea-table, which was frank even to noisiness; as it centered round the laughing face of Ardworth, who, though unknown to most or all of the ladies present, beyond a brief introduction to one or two of the first comers from Sir Miles (as the host had risen from his chess to bid them welcome), had already contrived to make himself perfectly at home, and outrageously popular. Nixed between two bouncing lasses, he had commenced acquaintance with them in a strain of familiar drollery and fun, which had soon broadened its

circle, and now embraced the whole groupe in the happy contagion of good humour and young animal spirits. Gabriel, allowed to sit up later than his usual hour, had not, as might have been expected, attached himself to this circle, nor indeed to any; he might be seen moving quietly about—now contemplating the pictures on the wall with a curious eye—now pausing at the whist table, and noting the game with the interest of an embryo gamester—now throwing himself on an ottoman, and trying to coax towards him Dash or Ponto—trying in vain, for both the dogs abhorred him; yet still, through all this general movement, had any one taken the pains to observe him closely, it might have been sufficiently apparent that his keen, bright, restless eye, from the corner of its long sly lids, roved chiefly towards the three persons whom he approached the least—his father, Mainwaring, and Mr. Vernon. This last had enconced himself apart from all, in the angle formed by one of the pilasters of the arch that divided the room, so that he was in command, as it were, of both sections. Reclined, with the careless grace that seemed inseparable from every attitude and motion of his person, in one of the great velvet chairs, with a book in his hand, which, to say truth, was turned upside down, but in the lecture of which he seemed absorbed—he heard at one hand the mirthful laughter that circled round young Ardworth, or, in its pauses, caught on the other side, muttered exclamations from the grave whist players—“If you had but trumped that diamond, ma’an!”—“Bless me, sir, it was the best heart!” And somehow or other, both the laughter and the exclamations affected him alike, with what then was called “the spleen”—for the one reminded him of his own young days of joyless,

careless mirth, of which his mechanical gaiety now was but a mocking ghost, and the other seemed a satire, a parody, on the fierce but noiseless rapture of gaming, through which his passions had passed—when thousands had slipped away with a bland smile, provoking not one of those natural ebullitions of emotion which there accompanied the loss of a shilling point. And besides this, Vernon had been so accustomed to the success of the drawing-room, to be a somebody and a something in the company of wits and princes, that he felt, for the first time, a sense of insignificance in this provincial circle. Those fat squires had heard nothing of Mr. Vernon, except that he would not have Laughton—he had no acres, no vote in their county—he was a nobody to them. Those ruddy maidens, though now and then, indeed, one or two might steal an admiring glance at a figure of elegance so unusual, regarded him not with the female interest he had been accustomed to inspire. They felt instinctively that he could be nothing to them, nor they to him—a mere London fop, and not half so handsome as Squires Bluff and Chuff.

Rousing himself from this little vexation to his vanity, with a conscious smile at his own weakness, Vernon turned his looks towards the door, waiting for Lucretia's entrance, and since her uncle's address to him, feeling that new and indescribable interest in her appearance, which is apt to steal into every breast, when what was before but an indifferent acquaintance, is suddenly enhaled with the light of a possible wife. At length, the door opened, and Lucretia entered. Mr. Vernon lowered his book, and gazed with an earnestness that partook both of doubt and admiration.

Lucretia Clavering was tall—tall beyond what is admitted to be tall in

woman; but in her height there was nothing either awkward or masculine—a figure more perfect never served for model to a sculptor. The dress at that day, unbecoming as we now deem it, was not to her—at least, on the whole—disadvantageous. The short waist gave greater sweep to her majestic length of limb, while the classic thinness of the drapery betrayed the exact proportion and the exquisite contour. The arms then were worn bare almost to the shoulder, and Lucretia's arms were not more faultless in shape than dazzling in their snowy colour—the stately neck, the falling shoulders, the firm, slight, yet rounded bust—all would have charmed equally the artist and the sensualist. Fortunately, the sole defect of her form was not apparent at a distance: that defect was in the hand; it had not the usual faults of female youthfulness—the superfluity of flesh, the too rosy healthfulness of colour; on the contrary, it was small and thin, but it was, nevertheless, more the hand of a man than a woman; the shape had a man's nervous distinctness, the veins swelled like sinews, the joints of the fingers were marked and prominent. In that hand, it almost seemed as if the iron force of the character betrayed itself. But as we have said, this slight defect which few, if seen, would hypercritically notice, could not of course be perceptible as she moved slowly up the room; and Vernon's eye, glancing over the noble figure rested upon the face. Was it handsome?—was it repelling? Strange that in feature it had pretensions to the highest order of beauty, and yet, even that experienced connoisseur in female charms was almost puzzled what sentence to pronounce. The hair, as was the fashion of the day, clustered in profuse curls over the forehead, but could not conceal a slight line or wrinkle between the

brows; and this line, rare in women at any age, rare even in men at hers, gave an expression at once of thought and sternness to the whole face. The eyebrows themselves were straight, and not strongly marked,—a shade or two perhaps too light, a fault still more apparent in the lashes; the eyes were large, full, and, though bright, astonishingly calm and deep, at least in ordinary moments; yet withal they wanted the charm of that steadfast and open look, which goes at once to the heart, and invites its trust; their expression was rather vague and abstracted. She usually looked astant while she spoke, and this, which with some appears but shyness, in one so self-collected, had an air of falsehood. But when, at times, if earnest, and bent rather on examining those she addressed than guarding herself from penetration, she fixed those eyes upon you with sudden and direct scrutiny, the gaze impressed you powerfully, and haunted you with a strange spell. The eye itself was of a peculiar and displeasing colour—not blue, nor grey, nor black, nor hazel, but rather of that cat-like green, which is drowsy in the light, and vivid in the shade. The profile was purely Greek, and so seen, Lucretia's beauty seemed incontestable; but in front face, and still more when inclined between the two, all the features took a sharpness, that, however regular, had something chilling and severe; the mouth was small, but the lips were thin and pale, and had an expression of effort and contraction, which added to the distrust that her sidelong glance was calculated to inspire. The teeth were dazzlingly white, but sharp and thin, and the eye-teeth were much longer than the rest. The complexion was pale, but without much delicacy; the paleness seemed not natural to it, but rather that hue which study and late vigils give to men; so that she wanted

the freshness and bloom of youth, and looked older than she was—an effect confirmed by an absence of roundness in the cheek, not noticeable in the profile, but rendering the front face somewhat harsh as well as sharp. In a word, the face and the figure were not in harmony; the figure prevented you from pronouncing her to be masculine—the face took from the figure the charm of feminacy. It was the head of the young Augustus upon the form of Agrippina. One touch more, and we close a description, which already perhaps the reader may consider frivolously minute. If you had placed before the mouth and lower part of the face a mask or bandage, the whole character of the upper face would have changed at once; the eye lost its glittering falseness, the brow its sinister contraction; you would have pronounced the face not only beautiful, but sweet and womanly. Take that bandage suddenly away, and the change would have startled you, and startled you the more, because you could detect no sufficient defect or disproportion in the lower part of the countenance to explain it. It was as if the mouth was the key to the whole: the key nothing without the text, the text uncomprehended without the key.

Such, then, was Lucretia Clavering in outward appearance, at the age of twenty—striking to the most careless eye—interesting and perplexing the student in that dark language, never yet deciphered,—the human countenance. The reader must have observed, that the effect every face that he remarks for the first time produces, is different from the impression it leaves upon him when habitually seen. Perhaps, no two persons differ more from each other, than does the same countenance in our earliest recollection of it from the countenance regarded in the familiarity of repeated intercourse. And this

was especially the case with Lucretia Clavering's; the first impulse of nearly all who beheld it was distrust that partook of fear; it almost inspired you with a sense of danger. The judgment rose up against it; the heart set itself on its guard. But this uneasy sentiment soon died away with most observers, in admiration at the chiselled outline, which, like the Grecian sculpture, gained the more the more it was examined; in respect for the intellectual power of the expression; and in fascinated pleasure at the charm of a smile, rarely employed, it is true, but the more attractive, both for that reason and for its sudden effect in giving brightness and persuasion to an aspect that needed them so much. It was literally like the abrupt breaking out of a sunbeam; and the repellent impression of the face, thus familiarised away, the matchless form took its natural influence; so that, while one who but saw Lucretia for a moment, might have pronounced her almost plain, and certainly not prepossessing in appearance, those with whom she lived, those whom she sought to please, those who saw her daily, united in acknowledgment of her beauty; and if they still felt awe, attributed it only to the force of her understanding.

As she now came midway up the room, Gabriel started from his seat, and ran to her caressingly. Lucretia bent down, and placed her hand upon his fair locks. As she did so, he whispered—

"Mr. Vernon has been watching for you."

"Hush! Where is your father?"

"Behind the screen, at chess with Sir Miles."

"With Sir Miles!" and Lucretia's eye fell with the direct gaze we have before referred to, upon the boy's face.

"I have been looking over them pretty often," said he, meaningly;

"they have talked of nothing but the game."

Lucretia lifted her head, and glanced round with her furtive eye; the boy divined the search, and with a scarce perceptible gesture, pointed her attention to Mainwaring's retreat. Her vivid smile passed over her lips, as she bowed slightly to her lover, and then withdrawing the hand which Gabriel had taken in his own, she moved on, passed Vernon with a commonplace word or two, and was soon exchanging greetings with the gay merry-makers in the further part of the room. A few minutes afterwards, the servants entered, the tea-table was removed, chairs thrust back—a single lady of a certain age volunteered her services at the piano, and dancing began within the ample space which the arch fenced off from the whist players. Vernon had watched his opportunity, and at the first sound of the piano had gained Lucretia's side, and with grave politeness pre-engaged her hand for the opening dance.

At that day, though it is not so very long ago, gentlemen were not ashamed to dance, and to dance well; it was no languid saunter through a quadrille; it was fair, deliberate, skilful dancing, amongst the courtly; free, bounding movement amongst the gay.

Vernon, as might be expected, was the most admired performer of the evening; but he was thinking very little of the notice he at last excited; he was employing such ingenuity as his experience of life supplied to the deficiencies of a very imperfect education, limited to the little flogged into him at Eton, in deciphering the character and getting at the heart of his fair partner.

"I wonder you do not make Sir Miles take you to London, my cousin, if you will allow me to call you so. You ought to have been presented."

"I have no wish to go to London yet."

"Yet!" said Mr. Vernon, with the somewhat *fade* gallantry of his day; "beauty even like yours has little time to spare."

"Hands across, hands across!" cried Mr. Ardworth.

"And," continued Mr. Vernon, as soon as a pause was permitted to him, "there is a song which the Prince sings, written by some sensible old-fashioned fellow, which says—

"Gather your rosebuds while you may,
For Time is still a-flying."

"You have obeyed the moral of the song yourself, I believe, Mr. Vernon."

"Call me cousin, or Charles—Charley, if you like—as most of my friends do: nobody ever calls me Mr. Vernon; I don't know myself by that name."

"Down the middle, we are all waiting for you," shouted Ardworth.

And down the middle with wondrous grace glided the exquisite nankins of Charley Vernon.

The dance now, thanks to Ardworth, became too animated and riotous to allow more than a few broken monosyllables till Vernon and his partner gained the end of the set, and then, flirting his partner's fan, he recommenced—

"Seriously, my consin, you must sometimes feel very much moped here."

"Never!" answered Lucretia. Not once yet had her eye rested on Mr. Vernon. She felt that she was sounded.

"Yet I am sure you have a taste for the pomps and vanities. Aha! there is ambition under those careless curls," said Mr. Vernon, with his easy adorable impertinence.

Lucretia winced.

"But if I were ambitious, what field for ambition could I find in London?"

"The same as Alexander—empire, my cousin."

"You forget that I am not a man. Man, indeed, may hope for an empire. It is something to be a Pitt, or even a Warren Hastings."

Mr. Vernon stared. Was this stupidity, or what?

"A woman has an empire more undisputed than Mr. Pitt's, and more pitiless than that of Governor Hastings."

"Oh pardon me, Mr. Vernon ——"

"Charles, if you please."

Lucretia's brow darkened.

"Pardon me," she repeated; "but these compliments, if such they are meant to be, meet a very ungrateful return. A woman's empire over gauzes and ribbons, over tea-tables and drums, over fops and coquettes, is not worth a journey from Laughton to London."

"You think you can despise admiration?"

"What you mean by admiration—yes."

"And love, too?" said Vernon, in a whisper.

Now Lucretia at once and abruptly raised her eyes to her partner. Was he aiming at her secret?—was he hinting at intentions of his own? The look chilled Vernon, and he turned away his head.

Suddenly, then, in pursuance of a new train of ideas, Lucretia altered her manner to him. She had detected what before she had surmised. This sudden familiarity on his part arose from notions her uncle had instilled—the visitor had been incited to become the suitor. Her penetration into character, which from childhood had been her passionate study, told her that on that light, polished, fearless nature, scorn would have slight effect—to meet the familiarity would be the best means to secure a friend, to disarm a wooer. She changed then her manner: she summoned up her

extraordinary craft : she accepted the intimacy held out to her, not to unguard herself, but to lay open her opponent. It became necessary to her to know this man, to have such power as the knowledge might give her. Insensibly and gradually she led her companion away from his design of approaching her own secrets or character, into frank talk about himself. All unconsciously he began to lay bare to his listener the infirmities of his erring, open heart. Silently she looked down, and plumbed them all : the frivolity, the recklessness, the half gay, half mournful sense of waste and ruin. There, blooming amongst the wrecks, she saw the fairest flowers of noble manhood, profuse and fragrant still—generosity and courage, and disregard for self. Spendthrift and gambler, on one side the medal ; gentleman and soldier, on the other. Beside this maimed and imperfect nature, she measured her own prepared and profound intellect, and as she listened, her smile became more bland and frequent. She could afford to be gracious ; she felt superiority, scorn, and safety.

As this seeming intimacy had matured, Vernon and his partner had quitted the dance, and were conversing apart in the recess of one of the windows, which the newspaper readers had deserted, in the part of the room where Sir Miles and Dalibard, still seated, were about to commence their third game at chess. The baronet's hand ceased from the task of arranging his pawns, his eye was upon the pair, and then, after a long and complacent gaze, it looked round without discovering the object it sought.

"I am about to task your kindness most improperly, Monsieur Dalibard," said Sir Miles, with that politeness so displeasing to Ardworth, "but will you do me the favour to move aside that fold of the screen. I wish for a

better view of our young people. Thank you very much."

Sir Miles now discovered Mainwaring, and observed that far from regarding with self-betraying jealousy the apparent flirtation going on between Lucretia and her kinsman, he was engaged in animated conversation with the chairman of the quarter sessions. Sir Miles was satisfied, and ranged his pawns. All this time, and indeed ever since they had sat down to play, the Provençal had been waiting with the patience that belonged to his character, for some observation from Sir Miles on the subject, which his sagacity perceived was engrossing his thoughts. There had been about the old gentleman a fidgety restlessness, which showed that something was on his mind. His eyes had been frequently turned towards his niece since her entrance ; once or twice he had cleared his throat and hemmed,—his usual prelude to some more important communication ; and Dalibard had heard him muttering to himself, and fancied he caught the name of "Mainwaring." And indeed the baronet had been repeatedly on the verge of sounding his secretary, and as often had been checked both by pride in himself and pride for Lucretia. It seemed to him beneath his own dignity and hers even to hint to an inferior a fear, a doubt of the heiress of Laughton. Olivier Dalibard could easily have led on his patron—he could easily, if he pleased it, have dropped words to instil suspicion and prompt question, but that was not his object ; he rather shunned than courted any reference to himself upon the matter ; for he knew that Lucretia, if she could suppose that he, however indirectly, had betrayed her to her uncle, would at once declare his own suit to her, and so procure his immediate dismissal ; while aware of her powers of dissimulation, and her influence over her

uncle, he feared that a single word from her would suffice to remove all suspicion in Sir Miles, however ingeniously implanted, and however truthfully grounded. But all the while, under his apparent calm, his mind was busy, and his passions burning.

"Pshaw, your old play—the bishop again!" said Sir Miles, laughing, as he moved a knight to frustrate his adversary's supposed plan; and then turning back, he once more contemplated the growing familiarity between Vernon and his niece. This time he could not contain his pleasure; "Dalibard, my dear sir," he said, rubbing his hands, "look yonder; they would make a handsome couple!"

"Who, sir?" said the Provençal, looking another way, with dogged stupidity.

"Who? damn it, man! nay, pray forgive my ill manners—but I felt glad, sir, and proud, sir. Who? Charley Vernon and Lucretia Clavering."

"Assuredly, yes. Do you think that there is a chance of so happy an event?"

"Why, it depends only on Lucretia; I shall never force her." Here Sir Miles stopped, for Gabriel, unperceived before, picked up his patron's pocket handkerchief.

Olivier Dalibard's grey eyes rested coldly on his son. "You are not dancing to night, my boy. Go; I like to see you amused."

The boy obeyed at once, as he always did, the paternal commands.—He found a partner, and joined a dance just began; and in the midst of the dance, Honoré Gabriel Varney seemed a new being: not Ardworth himself so thoroughly entered into the enjoyment of the exercise, the lights, the music. With brilliant eyes and dilated nostrils, he seemed prematurely to feel all that is exciting and voluptuous in that exhilaration,

which to childhood is usually so innocent. His glances followed the fairest form; his clasp lingered in the softest hand; his voice trembled as the warm breath of his partner came on his cheeks.

Meanwhile, the conversation between the chess-players continued.

"Yes," said the baronet, "it depends only on Lucretia,—and she seems pleased with Vernon; who would not be?"

"Your penetration rarely deceives you, sir. I own I think with you. Does Mr. Vernon know that you would permit the alliance?"

"Yes; but——" the baronet stopped short.

"You were saying, but—but what, Sir Miles?"

"Why the dog affected diffidence; he had some fear lest he should not win her affections—but luckily, at least, they are disengaged."

Dalibard looked grave, and his eye, as if involuntarily, glanced towards Mainwaring. As ill luck would have it, the young man had then ceased his conversation with the chairman of the quarter sessions, and with arms folded, brow contracted, and looks, earnest, anxious, and intent, was contemplating the whispered conference between Lucretia and Vernon.

Sir Miles's eye had followed his secretary's, and his face changed. His hand fell on the chess-board, and upset half the men; he uttered a very audible "Zounds!"

"I think, Sir Miles," said the Provençal, rising as if conscious that Sir Miles wished to play no more—"I think that if you spoke soon to Miss Clavering, as to your views with regard to Mr. Vernon, it might ripen matters; for I have heard it said by French mothers—and our French women understand the female heart, sir—that a girl having no other affection is often prepossessed at once in favour of a man, whom she knows

beforehand is prepared to woo and to win her, whereas without that knowledge, he would have seemed but an ordinary acquaintance."

"It is shrewdly said, my dear Monsieur Dalibard; and for more reasons than one, the sooner I speak to her the better. Lend me your arm—it is time for supper—I see the dance is over."

Passing by the place where Mainwaring still leant, the baronet looked at him fixedly. The young man did not notice the gaze. Sir Miles touched him gently. He started as from a reverie:

"You have not danced, Mr. Mainwaring."

"I dance so seldom, Sir Miles," said Mainwaring, colouring.

"Ah! you employ your head more than your heels, young gentleman; very right—I must speak to you to-morrow. Well, ladies, I hope you have enjoyed yourselves. My dear Mrs. Vesey, you and I are old friends, you know—many a minuet we have danced together, eh! We can't dance now—but we can walk arm in arm together still. Honour me. And your little grandson—vaccinated, eh! Wonderful invention! To supper, ladies—to supper!"

The company were gone. The lights were out, all save the lights of heaven, and they came bright and still through the casements: Moonbeam and Starbeam, they seemed now to have the old house to themselves. In came the rays, brighter and longer and bolder—like fairies that march, rank upon rank, into their kingdom of solitude. Down the oak stairs, from the casements, blazoned with heraldry, moved the rays, creepingly, fearfully. On the armour in the hall clustered the rays boldly and brightly, till the steel shone out like a mirror. In the library, long and low, they just entered, stopped short—it was no place for their play. In the drawing-

room, now deserted, they were more curious and adventurous. Through the large window, still open, they came in freely and archly, as if to spy what had caused such disorder; the stiff chairs out of place, the smooth floor despoiled of its carpet—that scarf forgotten on the table—the rays lingered upon them all. Up and down, through the house, from the base to the roof, roved the children of the air,—and found but two spirits awake amidst the slumber of the rest.

In that tower to the east—in the tapestry chamber—with the large gilded bed in the recess, came the rays, tamed and wan, as if scared by the grosser light on the table. By that table sat a girl, her brow leaning on one hand; in the other she held a rose—it is a love-token—exchanged with its sister rose, by stealth—in mute sign of reproach for doubt excited—an assurance and a reconciliation. A love-token!—shrink not, ye rays—there is something akin to you in love. But, see, the hand closes convulsively on the flower—it hides it not in the breast—it lifts it not to the lip; it throws it passionately aside. "How long!" muttered the girl, impetuously—"how long! and to think that *will* here cannot shorten an hour!" Then she rose, and walked to and fro, and each time she gained a certain niche in the chamber, she paused, and then irresolutely passed on again. What is in that niche! Only books. What can books teach thee, pale girl? The step treads firmer, this time it halts more resolved. The hand that clasped the flower takes down a volume. The girl sits again before the light. See, oh, rays, what is the volume! Moon and Starbeam, ye love what lovers read by the lamp in the loneliness. No love-ditty this; no yet holier lesson to patience and moral to hope. What

hast thou, young girl, strong in health and rich in years, with the lore of the leech,—with prognostics, and symptoms, and diseases? She is tracing with hard eyes the signs that precede the grim enemy, in his most sudden approach—the habits that invite him, the warnings that he gives. He whose wealth shall make her free, has twice had the visiting shock—he starves not—he lives free! She closes the volume, and, musing, metes him out the hours and days he has to live. Shrink back, ye rays! The love is disenhalloved: while the hand was on the rose the thought was on the charnel.

Yonder, in the opposite tower, in the small casement near the roof, came the rays; Childhood is asleep. Moon and Starbeam, ye love the slumbers of the child! The door opens—a dark figure steals noiselessly in. The father comes to look on the sleep of his son. Holy tenderness, if this be all!

“Gabriel, wake!” said a low, stern voice, and a rough hand shook the sleeper.

The sharpest test of those nerves, upon which depends the mere animal courage, is to be roused suddenly in the depth of night, by a violent hand. The impulse of Gabriel, thus startled, was neither of timidity nor surprise. It was that of some Spartan boy, not new to danger: with a slight cry, and a fierce spring, the son’s hand clutched at the father’s throat. Dalibard shook him off with an effort, and a smile half in approval, half in irony, played by the moonlight over his lips.

“Blood will out, young tiger,” said he. “Hush, and hear me!”

“Is it you, father?” said Gabriel; “I thought,—I dreamed —”

“No matter; think—dream always, that man should be prepared for defence from peril!”

“Gabriel, (and the pale scholar

seated himself on the bed,) turn your face to mine—nearer; let the moon fall on it; lift your eyes—look at me—so! Are you not playing false to me? Are you not Lucretia’s spy, while you are pretending to be mine? It is so; your eye betrays you. Now, heed me; you have a mind beyond your years. Do you love best the miserable garret in London, the hard fare and squalid dress,—or your lodgment here, the sense of luxury, the sight of splendour, the atmosphere of wealth? You have the choice before you.”

“I choose as you would have me, then,” said the boy—“the last.”

“I believe you. Attend! you do not love me—that is natural—you are the son of Clara Varney! You have supposed that in loving Lucretia Clavering, you might vex or thwart me, you scarce knew how; and Lucretia Clavering has gold and gifts, and soft words, and promises, to bribe withal. I now tell you openly my plan with regard to this girl: it is my aim to marry her—to be master of this house and these lands. If I succeed, you share them with me. By betraying me, word or look, to Lucretia, you frustrate this aim; you plot against our rise and to our ruin. Deem not that you could escape my fall; if I am driven hence—as you might drive me—you share my fate; and, mark me, you are delivered up to my revenge! You cease to be my son—you are my foe. Child! you know me.”

The boy, bold as he was, shuddered; but after a pause, so brief that a breath scarce passed between his silence and his words, he replied, with emphasis:

“Father, you have read my heart. I have been persuaded by Lucretia (for she bewitches me), to watch you—at least, when you are with Sir Miles. I knew that this was mixed up with Mr. Mainwaring. Now that

you have made me understand your own views, I will be true, to you—true without threats.”

The father looked hard on him, and seemed satisfied with the gaze. “Remember, at least, that your future rests upon your truth: *that* is no threat—that is a thought of hope. Now sleep or muse on it.” He dropped the curtain which his hand had drawn aside, and stole from the room as noiselessly as he had entered. The boy slept no more. Deceit, and cupidity, and corrupt ambition, were at work in his brain. Shrink back, Moon and Starbeam! On that child’s brow play the demons who had followed the father’s step to his bed of sleep.

Back to his own room, close at hand, crept Olivier Dalibard. The walls were lined with books—many in language and deep in lore. Moon and Starbeam, ye love the midnight solitude of the scholar! The Provencal stole to the casement, and looked forth. All was serene; breathless trees, and gleaming sculpture, and whitened sward, girdled by the mass of shadow. Of what thought the man? not of the present loveliness which the scene gave to his eye, nor of the future mysteries which the stars should whisper to the soul. Gloomily over a stormy and a hideous past, roved the memory, stored with fraud and foul with crime; plan upon plan, schemed with ruthless wisdom, followed up by remorseless daring, and yet all now a ruin and a blank!—an intellect at war with good, and the good had conquered! But the conviction neither touched the conscience, nor enlightened the reason; he felt, it is true, a moody sense of impotence, but it brought rage, not despondency:

it was not that he submitted to Good, as too powerful to oppose, but that he deemed he had not yet gained all the mastery over the arsenal of Evil. And evil he called it not. Good and evil to him were but subordinate genii, at the command of Mind: they were the slaves of the lamp. But had he got at the true secret of the lamp itself? “How is it,” he thought, as he turned impatiently from the casement, “that I am baffled here, where my fortunes seemed most assured? Here the mind has been of my own training, and prepared by nature to my hand;—here all opportunity has smiled. And suddenly the merest commonplace, in the vulgar lives of mortals—an unlooked for rival,—rival, too, of the mould I had taught her to despise—one of the stock gallants of a comedy—no character, but youth and fair looks; yea, the lover of the stage starts up, and the fabric of years is overthrown.” As he thus mused, he placed his hand upon a small box on one of the tables. “Yet, within this,” resumed his soliloquy, and he struck the lid, that gave back a dull sound,—“within this I hold the keys of life and death! Fool, the power does not reach to the heart, except to still it. Verily and indeed were the old heathens mistaken? Are there no philtres to change the current of desire?—but touch one chord in a girl’s affection, and all the rest is mine—all—all, lands, station, power—all the rest are in the opening of this lid!”

Hide in the cloud, O Moon!—shrink back, ye Stars! send not your holy, pure, and trouble-lulling light to the countenance blanched and livid with the thoughts of murder.

CHAPTER III.

CONFERENCES.

THE next day Sir Miles did not appear at breakfast; not that he was unwell, but that he meditated holding certain audiences, and on such occasions the good old gentleman liked to prepare himself. He belonged to a school in which, amidst much that was hearty and convivial, there was much also that, now-a-days, would seem stiff and formal, contrasting the other school immediately succeeding him, which Mr. Vernon represented, and of which the Charles Surface of Sheridan is a faithful and admirable type. The room that Sir Miles appropriated to himself was, properly speaking, the state apartment, called, in the old inventories, "King James's chamber;" it was on the first floor, communicating with the picture gallery, which, at the farther end opened upon a corridor, admitting to the principal bed-rooms. As Sir Miles cared nothing for holiday state, he had unscrupulously taken his *cubiculum* in this chamber, which was really the handsomest in the house, except the banquet hall; placed his bed in one angle, with a huge screen before it, filled up the space with his Italian antiques and curiosities, and fixed his favourite pictures on the faded gilt leather panelled on the walls. His main motive in this was the communication with the adjoining gallery, which, when the weather was unfavourable, furnished ample room for his habitual walk. He knew how many strides by the help of his crutch made a mile, and this was convenient. Moreover he liked to look, when alone, on those old portraits of his

ancestors, which he had religiously conserved in their places, preferring to thrust his Florentine and Venetian masterpieces into bedrooms and parlours rather than to dislodge from the gallery the stiff ruffs, doublets, and fardingales of his predecessors. It was whispered in the house, that the baronet whenever he had to reprove a tenant, or lecture a dependant, took care to have him brought to his sanctum, through the full length of this gallery, so that the victim might be duly prepared and awed by the imposing effect of so stately a journey, and the grave faces of all the generations of St. John, which could not fail to impress him with the dignity of the family, and alarm him at the prospect of the injured frown of its representative. Across this gallery now, following the steps of the powdered valet, strode young Ardworth; staring now and then at some portrait more than usually grim, more often wondering why his boots that never creaked before, should creak on those particular boards, and feeling a quiet curiosity without the least mixture of fear or awe, as to what old Square-toes intended to say to him. But all feeling of irreverence ceased when, shown into the baronet's room, and the door closed, Sir Miles rose with a smile and cordially shaking his hand, said, dropping the punctilious courtesy of Mister—"Ardworth, sir, if I had a little prejudice against you, before you came, you have conquered it. You are a fine manly, spirited fellow, sir; and you have an old man's good

wishes, which are no bad beginning to a young man's good fortunes."

The colour rushed over Ardworth's forehead, and a tear sprang to his eyes. He felt a rising at his throat, as he stammered out some not very audible reply.

"I wished to see you, young gentleman, that I might judge myself what you would like best, and what would best fit you. Your father is in the army; what say you to a pair of colours?"

"Oh, Sir Miles, that is my utmost ambition! Anything but law, except the church; anything but the church, except a desk and a counter!"

The baronet, much pleased, gave him a gentle pat on the shoulder. "Ha, ha! *we* gentlemen, you see, (for the Ardworths are very well born—very) *we*, gentlemen, understand each other! Between you and me, I never liked the law—never thought a man of birth should belong to it—take money for lying—shabby—shocking! Don't let that go any further! The church—Mother Church—I honour her! Church and state go together! But one ought to be very good to preach to others—better than you and I are—eh, eh? ha, ha! Well, then, you like the army—there's a letter for you to the Horse Guards—go up to town—your business is done; and, as for your outfit—read this little book at your leisure." And Sir Miles thrust a pocket-book into Ardworth's hand.

"But pardon me," said the young man, much bewildered. "What claim have I, Sir Miles, to such generosity? I know that my uncle offended you."

"Sir, that's the claim!" said Sir Miles, gravely. "I cannot live long!" he added, with a touch of melancholy in his voice; "let me die in peace with all!—perhaps I injured your uncle? Who knows but, if so, he bears and pardons me now?"

"Oh, Sir Miles!" exclaimed the thoughtless, generous hearted young man, "and my little playfellow, Susan, your own niece!"

Sir Miles drew back haughtily; but the burst that offended him rose so evidently from the heart, was so excusable from its motive, and the youth's ignorance of the world, that his frown soon vanished, as he said, calmly and gravely—

"No man, my good sir, can allow to others the right to touch on his family affairs; I trust I shall be just to the poor young lady; and so, if we never meet again, let us think well of each other. Go, my boy! serve your king and your country!"

"I will do my best, Sir Miles, if only to merit your kindness."

"Stay a moment: you are intimate, I find, with young Mainwaring?"

"An old college friendship, Sir Miles."

"The army will not do for him, eh?"

"He is too clever for it, sir."

"Ah, he'd make a lawyer, I suppose—glib tongue enough! and can talk well,—and lie, if he's paid for it!"

"I don't know how lawyers regard those matters, Sir Miles; but if you don't make him a lawyer, I am sure you must leave him an honest man."

"Really and truly——"

"Upon my honour I think so."

"Good day to you, and good luck. You must catch the coach at the lodge; for, I see by the papers, that, in spite of all the talk about Peace, they are raising regiments like wildfire."

With very different feelings from those with which he had entered the room, Ardworth quitted it. He hurried into his own chamber to thrust his clothes into his portmanteau, and, while thus employed, Mainwaring entered.

"Joy, my dear fellow! wish me

joy! I am going to town—into the army—abroad—to be shot at, thank Heaven! That dear old gentleman!—just throw me that coat, will you?”

A very few more words sufficed to explain what had passed to Mainwaring; he sighed when his friend had finished: “I wish I were going with you!”

“Do you? Sir Miles has only got to write another letter to the Horse Guards; but no, you are meant to be something better than food for powder; and, besides, your Lucretia! Hang it, I am sorry I cannot stay to examine her as I had promised; but I have seen enough to know that she certainly loves you. Ah, when she changed flowers with you, you did not think I saw you—sly, was not I? Pshaw! she was only playing with Vernon! But still, do you know, Will, now that Sir Miles has spoken to me so, that I could have sobbed—‘God bless you, my old boy!’—‘pon my life, I could!—now, do you know, that I feel enraged with you for abetting that girl to deceive him.”

“I am enraged with myself; and——” Here a servant entered, and informed Mainwaring that he had been searching for him—Sir Miles requested to see him in his room. Mainwaring started like a culprit. “Never fear,” whispered Ardworth; “he has no suspicion of you, I’m sure. Shake hands; when shall we meet again? Is it not odd, I, who am a Republican by theory, taking King George’s pay to fight against the French? No use stopping now to moralise on such contradictions. John—Tom, what’s your name—here, my man, here, throw that portmanteau on your shoulder, and come to the lodge.” And so, full of health, hope, vivacity, and spirit, John Walter Ardworth departed on his career.

Meanwhile, Mainwaring slowly took

his way to Sir Miles. As he approached the gallery, he met Lucretia, who was coming from her own room. “Sir Miles has sent for me,” he said, meaningly. He had time for no more, for the valet was at the door of the gallery, waiting to usher him to his host.

“Ha! you will say not a word that can betray us; guard your looks, too!” whispered Lucretia, hurriedly; “afterwards, join me by the cedars.” She passed on towards the staircase, and glanced at the large clock that was placed there. “Past eleven; Vernon is never up before twelve. I must see him before my uncle sends for me, as he will send if he suspects——” She paused, went back to her room, rang for her maid, dressed as for walking, and said, carelessly, “If Sir Miles wants me, I am gone to the rectory, and shall probably return by the village, so that I shall be back about three.” Towards the rectory, indeed, Lucretia bent her way; but half way there, turned back, and passing through the plantation at the rear of the house, awaited Mainwaring on the bench beneath the cedars. He was not long before he joined her. His face was sad and thoughtful; and when he seated himself by her side, it was with a weariness of spirit that alarmed her.

“Well,” said she, fearfully, and she placed her hand on his.

“Oh, Lucretia,” he exclaimed, as he pressed that hand, with an emotion that came from other passions than love, “we, or rather, I, have done great wrong. I have been leading you to betray your uncle’s trust, to convert your gratitude to him into hypocrisy. I have been unworthy of myself.—I am poor—I am humbly born; but, till I came here, I was rich and proud in honour. I am not so now. Lucretia, pardon me—pardon me! let the dream be over—we must

not sin thus; for it is sin, and the worst of sin—treachery. We must part: forget me!”

“Forget you! never, never, never!” cried Lucretia, with suppressed, but most earnest vehemence—her breast heaving, her hands, as he dropped the one he held, clasped together, her eyes, full of tears—transformed at once into softness, meekness, even while racked by passion and despair.

“Oh, William, say anything—reproach, chide, despise me, for mine is all the fault; say anything but that word—‘part.’ I have chosen you, I have sought you out, I have wooed you if you will; be it so. I cling to you—you are my all—all that saves me from—from *mys-lf*,” she added, falteringly, and in a hollow voice. “Your love—you know not what it is to me! I scarcely knew it myself before. I feel what it is now, when you say ‘part.’”

Agitated and tortured, Mainwaring writhed at these burning words, bent his face low, and covered it with his hands.

He felt her clasp struggling to withdraw them, yielded, and saw her kneeling at his feet. His manhood, and his gratitude, and his heart, all moved by that sight in one so haughty, he opened his arms, and she fell on his breast. “You will never say ‘part’ again, William!” she gasped, convulsively.

“But what are we to do?”

“Say, first, what has passed between you and my uncle.”

“Little to relate; for I can repeat words, not tones and looks. Sir Miles spoke to me, at first kindly and encouragingly, about my prospects, said it was time that I should fix myself, added a few words with menacing emphasis against what he called ‘idle dreams and desultory ambition,’ and observing that I changed countenance—for I felt that I did—his manner became more cold and severe.

Lucretia, if he has not detected our secret, he more than suspects my—my presumption. Finally, he said, drily, that I had better return home, consult with my father, and that if I preferred entering into the service of the government to any mercantile profession, he thought he had sufficient interest to promote my views. But, clearly and distinctly, he left on my mind one impression—that my visits here are over.”

“Did he allude to me—to Mr. Vernon?”

“Ah, Lucretia! do you know him so little—his delicacy, his pride!”

Lucretia was silent, and Mainwaring continued:

“I felt that I was dismissed; I took my leave of your uncle; I came hither with the intention to say farewell for ever.”

“Hush, hush! that thought is over! And you return to your father’s; perhaps better so; it is but hope deferred: and, in your absence, I can the more easily allay all suspicion, if suspicion exist; but I must write to you; we must correspond. William, dear William, write often—write kindly; tell me, in every letter, that you love me—that you love only me—that you will be patient, and confide.”

“Dear Lucretia,” said Mainwaring, tenderly, and moved by the pathos of her earnest and imploring voice: “but you forget; the bag is always brought first to Sir Miles; he will recognise my hand; and to whom can you trust your own letters?”

“True,” replied Lucretia, despondingly; and there was a pause: suddenly she lifted her head, and cried, “but your father’s house is not far from this—not ten miles—we can find a spot at the remote end of the park, near the path through the great wood; there I can leave my letters; there I can find yours.”

“But it must be seldom. If any

of Sir Miles's servants see me, if ——"

"Oh, William, William, this is not the language of love!"

"Forgive me—I think of you!"

"Love thinks of nothing but itself; it is tyrannical, absorbing—it forgets even the object loved; it feeds on danger—it strengthens by obstacles," said Lucretia, tossing her hair from her forehead, and with an expression of dark and wild power on her brow and in her eyes: "fear not for me, I am sufficient guard upon myself; even while I speak, I think; yes, I have thought of the very spot. You remember that hollow oak at the bottom of the dell, in which Guy St. John, the cavalier, is said to have hid himself from Fairfax's soldiers. Every Monday I will leave a letter in that hollow; every Tuesday you can search for it, and leave your own. This is but once a week; there is no risk here."

Mainwaring's conscience still smote him; but he had not the strength to resist the energy of Lucretia. The force of her character seized upon the weak part of his own—its gentleness, its fear of inflicting pain, its reluctance to say "no"—that simple cause of misery to the overtimid. A few sentences more, full of courage, confidence, and passion, on the part of the woman, of constraint, and yet of soothed and grateful affection on that of the man, and the affianced parted.

Mainwaring had already given orders to have his trunks sent to him at his father's; and, a hardy pedestrian by habit, he now struck across the park, passed the dell and the hollow tree, commonly called "Guy's Oak," and across woodland and fields golden with ripening corn, took his way to the town, in the centre of which, square, solid, and imposing, stood the respectable residence of his bustling, active, electioneering father.

Lucretia's eye followed a form, as fair as ever captivated maiden's glance, till it was out of sight; and then, as she emerged from the shade of the cedars into the more open space of the garden, her usual thoughtful composure was restored to her steadfast countenance. On the terrace, she caught sight of Vernon, who had just quitted his own room, where he always breakfasted alone, and who was now languidly stretched on a bench, and basking in the sun. Like all who have abused life, Vernon was not the same man in the early part of the day. The spirits that rose to temperate heat the third hour after noon, and expanded into glow, when the lights shone over gay carousers, at morning were flat and exhausted. With hollow eyes, and that weary fall of the muscles of the cheeks, which betrays the votary of Bacchus, the convivial three-bottle man—Charley Vernon forced a smile, meant to be airy and impertinent, to his pale lips, as he rose with effort, and extended three fingers to his cousin.

"Where have you been hiding? catching bloom from the roses?—you have the prettiest shade of colour—just enough—not a hue too much. And there is Sir Miles's valet gone to the rectory, and the fat footman puffing away towards the village, and I, like a faithful warden, from my post at the castle, all looking out for the truant."

"But who wants me, cousin?" said Lucretia, with the full blaze of her rare and captivating smile.

"The knight of Laughton confessedly wants thee, O damsel!—the knight of the Bleeding Heart may want thee more—dare he own it?"

And with a hand that trembled a little, not with love—at least it trembled always a little before the Madeira at luncheon—he lifted hers to his lips.

"Compliments again, words—idle words!" said Lucretia, looking down bashfully.

"How can I convince thee of my sincerity, unless thou takest my life as its pledge, maid of Laughton?"

And very much tired of standing, Charley Vernon drew her gently to the bench, and seated himself by her side. Lucretia's eyes were still down-cast, and she remained silent; Vernon, suppressing a yawn, felt that he was bound to continue. There was nothing very formidable in Lucretia's manner.

"Fore Gad!" thought he, "I suppose I must take the heiress after all; the sooner 'tis over, the sooner I can get back to Brook Street."

"It is premature, my fair cousin," said he, aloud—"premature, after less than a week's visit, and only some fourteen or fifteen hours' permitted friendship and intimacy, to say what is uppermost in my thoughts, but we spendthrifts are slow at nothing, not even at wooing. By sweet Venus, then, fair cousin, you look provokingly handsome! Sir Miles, your good uncle, is pleased to forgive all my follies and faults, upon one condition, that you will take on yourself the easy task to reform me. Will you, my fair cousin? Such as I am, you behold me! I am no sinner in the disguise of a saint! My fortune is spent—my health is not strong; but a young widow's is no mournful position. I am gay when I am well; good tempered when ailing. I never betrayed a trust—can you trust me with yourself?"

This was a long speech, and Charley Vernon felt pleased that it was over. There was much in it that would have touched a heart even closed to him, and a little genuine emotion had given light to his eyes and colour to his cheek. Amidst all the ravages of dissipation, there was something interesting in his countenance, and **manly in his tone and his gesture.**

But Lucretia was only sensible to one part of his confession—her uncle had consented to his suit. This was all of which she desired to be assured, and against this she now sought to screen herself.

"Your candour, Mr. Vernon," she said, avoiding his eye, "deserves candour in me. I cannot affect to misunderstand you;—but you take me by surprise—I was so unprepared for this. Give me time—I must reflect."

"Reflection is dull work in the country; you can reflect more amusingly in town, my fair cousin."

"I will wait, then, till I find myself in town."

"Ah, you make me the happiest, the most grateful of men," cried Mr. Vernon, rising with a semi-genuflexion, which seemed to imply, "Consider yourself knelt to," just as a courteous assailer, with a motion of the hand, implies, "Consider yourself hor-ewhipped."

Lucretia, who, with all her intellect, had no capacity for humour, recoiled and looked up in positive surprise.

"I do not understand you, Mr. Vernon," she said, with austere gravity.

"Allow me the bliss of flattering myself that you, at least, are understood," replied Charley Vernon, with imperturbable assurance. "You will wait to reflect till you are in town—that is to say, the day after our honeymoon, when you awake in May Fair."

Before Lucretia could reply, she saw the indefatigable valet formally approaching, with the anticipated message that Sir Miles requested to see her. She replied hurriedly to this last, that she would be with her uncle immediately, and when he had again disappeared within the porch, she said, with a constrained effort at frankness—

"Mr. Vernon, if I have misunder-

stood your words, I think I do not mis-take your character. You cannot wish to take advantage of my affection for my uncle, and the passive obedience I owe to him, to force me into a step—of which—of which—I have not yet sufficiently considered the results. If you really desire that my feelings should be consulted, that I should not—pardon me—consider myself sacrificed to the family pride of my guardian, and the interests of my suitor——”

“Madam!” exclaimed Vernon, reddening.

Pleased with the irritating effect her words had produced—Lucretia continued calmly—“If, in a word, I am to be a free agent in a choice on which my happiness depends, forbear to urge Sir Miles further at present—forebear to press your suit upon me. Give me the delay of a few months; I shall know how to appreciate your delicacy.”

“Miss Clavering,” answered Vernon, with a touch of the St. John haughtiness, “I am in despair that you should even think so grave an appeal to my honour necessary. I am well aware of your expectations and my poverty. And believe me, I would rather rot in a prison than enrich myself by forcing your inclinations. You have but to say the word, and I will (as becomes me as man and gentleman) screen you from all chance of Sir Miles’s displeasure, by taking it on myself to decline an honour of which I feel, indeed, very undeserving.”

“But I have offended you,” said Lucretia, softly, while she turned aside to conceal the glad light of her eyes,—“pardon me; and, to prove that you do so, give me your arm to my uncle’s room.”

Vernon, with rather more of Sir Miles’s antiquated stiffness, than his own rakish ease, offered his arm, with a profound reverence, to his cousin;

and they took their way to the house. Not till they had passed up the stairs, and were even in the gallery, did further words pass between them. Then Vernon said, “But what is your wish, Miss Clavering? On what footing shall I remain here?”

“Will you suffer me to dictate?” replied Lucretia, stopping short with well feigned confusion, as if suddenly aware that the right to dictate gives the right to hope.

“Ah, consider me at least as your slave!” whispered Vernon, as his eye, resting on the contour of that matchless neck, partially and advantageously turned from him, he began with his constitutional admiration of the sex, to feel interested in a pursuit, that now seemed, after piquing, to flatter, his self-love.

“Then I will use the privilege when we meet again,” answered Lucretia; and drawing her arm gently from his, she passed on to her uncle, leaving Vernon midway in the gallery.

Those faded portraits looked down on her with that melancholy gloom, which the effigies of our dead ancestors seem mysteriously to acquire. To noble and aspiring spirits, no homily to truth, and honour, and fair ambition is more eloquent, than the mute and melancholy canvas, from which our fathers, made, by death, our household gods, contemplate us still. They appear to confide to us the charge of their unblemished names. They speak to us from the grave, and, heard aright, the pride of family is the guardian angel of its heirs. But Lucretia, with her hard and scholastic mind, despised as the veriest weakness all the poetry that belongs to the sense of a pure descent. It was because she was proud as the proudest in herself, that she had nothing but contempt for the virtue, the valour, or the wisdom of those that had gone before. So with a brain busy with guile and stratagem, she trod on

beneath the eyes of the simple and spotless Dead.

Vernon, thus left alone, mused a few moments on what had passed between himself and the heiress, and then slowly retracing his steps, his eye roved along the stately series of his line. "Faith!" he muttered, "if my boyhood had been passed in this old gallery, his Royal Highness would have lost a good fellow and hard drinker; and his Majesty would have had, perhaps, a more distinguished soldier—certainly, a worthier subject. If I marry this lady, and we are blessed with a son, he shall walk through this gallery, once a day, before he is flogged into Latin!"

Lucretia's interview with her uncle was a masterpiece of art. What pity that such craft and subtlety were wasted in our little day, and on such petty objects; under the Medici, that spirit had gone far to the shaping of history. Sure, from her uncle's openness, that he would plunge at once into the subject for which she deemed she was summoned, she evinced no repugnance, when, tenderly kissing her, he asked, "If Charles Vernon had a chance of winning favour in her eyes?" She knew that she was safe in saying "No:" that her uncle would never force her inclinations: Safe so far as Vernon was concerned; but she desired more; she desired thoroughly to quench all suspicion that her heart was pre-occupied; entirely to remove from Sir Miles's thoughts the image of Mainwaring; and a denial of one suitor might quicken the baronet's eyes to the concealment of the other. Nor, was this all: if Sir Miles was seriously bent upon seeing her settled in marriage before his death, the dismissal of Vernon might only expose her to the importunity of new candidates, more difficult to deal with. Vernon himself she could use as the shield against the arrows of a host. There

fore, when Sir Miles repeated his question, she answered with much gentleness and seeming modest sense, that "Mr. Vernon had much that must prepossess in his favour; that in addition to his own advantages he had one, the highest in her eyes, her uncle's sanction and approval. But," and she hesitated with becoming and natural diffidence, "were not his habits unfixed and roving? So it was said; she knew not herself—she would trust her happiness to her uncle. But so, and if Mr. Vernon were really disposed to change, would it not be prudent to try him—try him where there was temptation; not in the repose of Laughton, but amidst his own haunts of London? Sir Miles had friends who would honestly inform him of the result. She did but suggest this: she was too ready to leave all to her dear guardian's acuteness and experience."

Melted by her docility, and in high approval of the prudence which betokened a more rational judgment than he himself had evinced, the good old man clasped her to his breast, and shed tears as he praised and thanked her—she had decided as she always did, for the best.—Heaven forbid that she should be wasted on an incorrigible man of pleasure! "And," said the frank-hearted gentleman, unable long to keep any thought concealed, "And to think that I could have wronged you, for a moment, my own noble child!—that I could have been deluded enough to suppose that the good looks of that boy Mainwaring might have caused you to forget what—but you change colour!—for with all her dissimulation, Lucretia loved too ardently not to shrink at that name thus suddenly pronounced. "Oh," continued the baronet, drawing her towards him still more closely, while with one hand he put back her face that he might read its expression the more closely—"oh, if

it had been so—if it be so, I will pity, not blame you, for my neglect was the fault; pity you, for I have known a similar struggle; admire you in pity, for you have the spirit of your ancestors, and you will conquer the weakness. Speak! have I touched on the truth? Speak without fear, child!—you have no mother; but in age a man sometimes gets a mother's heart."

Startled and alarmed as the lark when the step nears its nest, Lucretia summoned all the dark wile of her nature to mislead the intruder. "No, uncle, no; I am not so unworthy. You misconceived my emotion."

"Ah, you know that he has had the presumption to love you—the puppy! and you feel the compassion you women always feel for such offenders! Is that it?"

Rapidly Lucretia considered if it would be wise to leave that impression on his mind; on one hand, it might account for a moment's agitation, and if Mainwaring were detected hovering near the domain, in the exchange of their correspondence, it might appear but the idle, if hopeless, romance of youth, which haunts the mere home of its object—but, no; on the other hand, it left his banishment absolute

and confirmed. Her resolution was taken with a promptitude that made her pause not perceptible.

"No, my dear uncle," she said, so cheerfully, that it removed all doubt from the mind of her listener, "but Monsieur Dalibard has rallied me on the subject, and I was so angry with him, that when you touched on it I thought more of my quarrel with him than of poor timid Mr. Mainwaring himself. Come now, own it, dear sir! Monsieur Dalibard has instilled this strange fancy into your head."

"No, 'Slife: if he had taken such a liberty, I should have lost my librarian. No, I assure you, it was rather Vernon: you know true love is jealous."

"Vernon!" thought Lucretia; "he must go, and at once." Sliding from her uncle's arms to the stool at his feet, she then led the conversation more familiarly back into the channel it had lost, and when at last he escaped, it was with the understanding that, without promise or compromise, Mr. Vernon should return to London at once, and be put upon the ordeal, through which she felt assured it was little likely he should pass with success.

CHAPTER IV.

GUY'S OAK.

THREE weeks afterwards, the life at Laughton seemed restored to the cheerful and somewhat monotonous tranquillity of its course, before chafed and disturbed by the recent interruptions to the stream. Vernon had departed satisfied with the justice of the trial imposed on him, and far too high-spirited to seek to extort from niece or uncle any engagement beyond that which, to a nice sense of honour, the trial itself imposed. His memory and his heart were still faithful to Mary; but his senses, his fancy, his vanity, were a little involved in his success with the heiress. Though so free from all mercenary meanness, Mr. Vernon was still enough man of the world to be sensible of the advantages of the alliance which had first been pressed on him by Sir Miles; and from which Lucretia herself appeared not to be averse. The season of London was over, but there was always a set, and that set the one in which Charley Vernon principally moved, who found town fuller than the country. Besides, he went occasionally to Brighton, which was then to England what Baïæ was to Rome. The Prince was holding gay court at the Pavilion, and that was the atmosphere which Vernon was habituated to breathe. He was no parasite of royalty: he had that strong personal affection to the Prince which it is often the good fortune of royalty to attract. Nothing is less founded than the complaint which poets put into the lips of princes, that they have no friends: it is, at least, their own perverse fault if that be the case—a little

amiability, a little of frank kindness goes so far when it emanates from the rays of a crown! But Vernon was stronger than Lucretia deemed him,—once contemplating the prospect of a union which was to consign to his charge the happiness of another, and feeling all that he should owe in such a marriage to the confidence both of niece and uncle, he evinced steadier principles than he had ever made manifest, when he had only his own fortune to mar, and his own happiness to trifle with. He joined his old companions; but he kept aloof from their more dissipated pursuits. Beyond what was then thought the venial error of too devout libations to Bacchus, Charley Vernon seemed reformed.

Ardworth had joined a regiment which had departed for the field of action. Mainwaring was still with his father, and had not yet announced to Sir Miles any wish or project for the future.

Olivier Dalibard, as before, passed his mornings alone in his chamber—his noon and his evenings with Sir Miles. He avoided all private conferences with Lucretia. She did not provoke them. Young Gabriel amused himself in copying Sir Miles's pictures, sketching from Nature, scribbling in his room, prose or verse, no matter which (he never showed his lucubrations), pinching the dogs when he could catch them alone, shooting the cats, if they appeared in the plantation, on pretence of love for the young pheasants, snuftering into the cottages, where

he was a favourite, because of his good looks, but where he always contrived to leave the trace of his visits in disorder and mischief, upsetting the teakettle and scalding the children, or, what he loved dearly, setting two gossips by the ears. But these occupations were over by the hour Lucretia left her apartment. From that time he never left her out of view; and, when encouraged to join her at his usual privileged times, whether in the gardens at sunset, or in her evening niche in the drawing-room, he was sleek, silken, and caressing as Cupid, after plaguing the Nymphs, at the feet of Psyche. These two strange persons had indeed apparently that sort of sentimental familiarity which is sometimes seen between a fair boy and a girl much older than himself; but the attraction that drew them together was an indefinable instinct of their similarity in many traits of their several characters,—the whelp leopard sported fearlessly round the she-panther. Before Olivier's midnight conference with his son, Gabriel had drawn close and closer to Lucretia, as an ally against his father; for that father he cherished feelings which, beneath the most docile obedience, concealed horror and hate, and something of the ferocity of revenge. And if young Varney loved any one on earth except himself it was Lucretia Clavering. She had administered to his ruling passions, which were for effect and display; she had devised the dress which set off to the utmost his exterior, and gave it that picturesque and artistic appearance which he had sighed for in his study of the portraits of Titian and Vandyke. She supplied him (for in money she was generous) with enough to gratify and forestall every boyish caprice, and this liberality now turned against her, for it had increased into a settled vice, his natural taste for extravagance, and

made all other considerations subordinate to that of feeding his cupidity. She praised his drawings, which, though self-taught, were indeed extraordinary, predicted his fame as an artist, lifted him into consequence amongst the guests by her notice and eulogies; and what, perhaps, won him more than all, he felt that it was to her—to Dalibard's desire to conceal before her his more cruel propensities—that he owed his father's change from the most refined severity to the most paternal gentleness.

And thus he had repaid her, as she expected, by a devotion which she trusted to employ against her tutor himself, should the baffled aspirant become the scheming rival and the secret foe. But now, thoroughly aware of the gravity of his father's objects, seeing before him the chance of a settled establishment at Laughton, a positive and influential connection with Lucretia; and on the other hand, a return to the poverty he recalled with disgust, and the terrors of his father's solitary malice and revenge, he entered fully into Dalibard's sombre plans, and, without scruple or remorse, would have abetted any harm to his benefactress. Thuscraft doomed to have accomplices in craft, resembles the spider whose web, spread indeed for the fly, attracts the fellow spider that shall thrust it forth, and profit by the meshes it has woven for a victim, to surrender to a master.

Already young Varney, set quietly and ceaselessly to spy every movement of Lucretia's, had reported to his father two visits to the most retired part of the park; but he had not yet ventured near enough to discover the exact spot, and his very watch on Lucretia had prevented the detection of Mainwaring himself in his stealthy exchange of correspondence. Dalibard bade him continue his watch, without hinting at his ulterior intentions, for indeed, in these he was not

decided. Even should he discover any communication between Lucretia and Mainwaring, how reveal it to Sir Miles without for ever precluding himself from the chance of profiting by the betrayal? Could Lucretia ever forgive the injury, and could she fail to detect the hand that inflicted it? His only hope was in the removal of Mainwaring from his path by other agencies than his own, and (by an appearance of generosity and self-abandonment; in keeping her secret, and submitting to his fate) he trusted to regain the confidence she now withheld from him, and use it to his advantage when the time came to defend himself from Vernon. For he had learned from Sir Miles the passive understanding with respect to that candidate for her hand; and he felt assured that had Mainwaring never existed, could he cease to exist for her hopes, Lucretia, despite her dissimulation, would succumb to one she feared but respected, rather than to one she evidently trifled with and despised.

"But the course to be taken must be adopted after the evidence is collected," thought the subtle schemer, and he tranquilly continued his chess with the baronet.

Before, however, Gabriel could make any further discoveries, an event occurred which excited very different emotions amongst those it more immediately interested.

Sir Miles had, during the last twelvemonths, been visited by two seizures, seemingly of an apoplectic character. Whether they were apoplexy or the less alarming attacks that arise from some more gentle congestion, occasioned by free living and indolent habits, was matter of doubt with his physician—not a very skilful, though a very formal man. Country doctors were not then the same able, educated, and scientific class that they are now rapidly becoming. Sir Miles himself so stoutly and so eagerly

repudiated the least hint of the more unfavourable interpretation, that the doctor, if not convinced by his patient, was awed from expressing plainly a contrary opinion. There are certain persons who will dismiss their physician if he tells them the truth: Sir Miles was one of them.

In his character there was a weakness not uncommon to the proud. He did not fear death, but he shrank from the thought that others should calculate on his dying. He was fond of his power, though he exercised it gently: he knew that the power of wealth and station is enfeebled in proportion as its dependents can foresee the date of its transfer. He dreaded, too, the comments which are always made on those visited by his peculiar disease: "Poor Sir Miles! an apoplectic fit! his intellect must be very much shaken—he revoked at whist last night—memory sadly impaired!" This may be a pitiable foible; but heroes and statesmen have had it most: pardon it in the proud old man. He enjoined the physician to state throughout the house and the neighbourhood, that the attacks were wholly innocent and unimportant. The physician did so, and was generally believed; for Sir Miles seemed as lively and as vigorous after them as before. Two persons alone were not deceived—Dalibard and Lucretia. The first, at an earlier part of his life, had studied pathology with the profound research and ingenious application, which he brought to bear upon all he undertook. He whispered from the first to Lucretia—

"Unless your uncle changes his habits, takes exercise, and forbears wine and the table, his days are numbered."

And when this intelligence was first conveyed to her, before she had become acquainted with Mainwaring, Lucretia felt the shock of a grief sudden and sincere. We have seen

how these better sentiments changed as a human life became an obstacle in her way. In her character, what phrenologists call 'destructiveness,' in the comprehensive sense of the word, was superlatively developed. She had not actual cruelty; she was not blood-thirsty: those vices belong to a different cast of character. She was rather deliberately and intellectually unsparing—a goal was before her; she must march to it; all in the way were but hostile impediments. At first, however, Sir Miles was not in the way, except to fortune, and for that, as avarice was not her leading vice, she could well wait; therefore, at this hint of the Provençal's, she ventured to urge her uncle to abstinence and exercise, but Sir Miles was touchy on the subject; he feared the interpretations which great change of habits might suggest, the memory of the fearful warning died away, and he felt as well as before, for, save an old rheumatic gout (which had long since left him, with no other apparent evil but a lameness in the joints, that rendered exercise unwelcome and painful), he possessed one of those comfortable, and often treacherous constitutions, which evince no displeasure at irregularities, and bear all liberties with philosophical composure. Accordingly, he would have his own way; and he contrived to coax or to force his doctor into an authority on his side: wine was necessary to his constitution; much exercise was a dangerous fatigue. The second attack, following four months after the first, was less alarming, and Sir Miles fancied it concealed even from his niece; but three nights after his recovery, the old baronet sat musing alone for some time in his own room, before he retired to rest. Then he rose, opened his desk, and read his will attentively, locked it up with a slight sigh, and took down his Bible. The next

morning he despatched the letters which summoned Ardworth and Vernon to his house; and, as he quitted his room, his look lingered with melancholy fondness upon the portraits in the gallery. No one was by the old man to interpret these slight signs, in which lay a world of meaning.

A few weeks after Vernon had left the house, and in the midst of the restored tranquillity we have described, it so happened that Sir Miles's physician, after dining at the hall, had been summoned to attend one of the children at the neighbouring rectory, and there he spent the night. A little before daybreak his slumbers were disturbed; he was recalled in all haste to Laughton Hall. For the third time, he found Sir Miles speechless. Dalibard was by his bedside. Lucretia had not been made aware of the seizure; for Sir Miles had previously told his valet (who of late slept in the same room) never to alarm Miss Clavering if he was taken ill. The doctor was about to apply his usual remedies; but when he drew forth his lancet, Dalibard placed his hand on the physician's arm—

"Not *this* time," he said slowly, and with emphasis; "it will be his death."

"Pooh, sir!" said the doctor, disdainfully.

"Do so, then! bleed him, and take the responsibility. I have studied medicine—I know these symptoms. In this case the apoplexy may spare—the lancet kills."

The physician drew back dismayed and doubtful.

"What would you do, then?"

"Wait three minutes longer the effect of the cataplasms I have applied. If they fail——"

"Ay, then?"

"A chill bath, and vigorous friction."

"Sir, I will never permit it."

"Then murder your patient your own way."

All this while Sir Miles lay senseless, his eyes wide open, his teeth locked. The doctor drew near, looked at the lancet, and said irresolutely—

"Your practice is new to me; but if you have studied medicine, that's another matter. Will you guarantee the success of your plan?"

"Yes."

"Mind, I wash my hands of it; I take Mr. Jones to witness!" and he appealed to the valet.

"Call up the footmen, and lift your master," said Dalibard; and the doctor, glancing round, saw that a bath, filled some seven or eight inches deep with water, stood already prepared in the room. Perplexed and irresolute, he offered no obstacle to Dalibard's movements. The body, seemingly lifeless, was placed in the bath; and the servants, under Dalibard's directions, applied vigorous and incessant friction. Several minutes elapsed before any favourable symptom took place; at length, Sir Miles heaved a deep sigh, and the eyes moved—a minute or two more, and the teeth chattered; the blood, set in motion, appeared on the surface of the skin. Life ebbed back; the danger was past; the dark foe driven from the citadel. Sir Miles spoke audibly, though incoherently, as he was taken back to his bed, warmly covered up, the lights removed, noise forbidden, and Dalibard and the doctor remained in silence by the bedside.

"Rich man," thought Dalibard, "thine hour is not yet come; thy wealth must not pass to the boy Mainwaring."

Sir Miles's recovery, under the care of Dalibard, who now had his own way, was as rapid and complete as before. Lucretia, when she heard, the next morning, of the attack, felt, we dare not say, a guilty joy, but a terrible and feverish agitation. Sir

Miles himself, informed by his valet, of Dalibard's wrestle with the doctor, felt a profound gratitude, and reverent wonder for the simple means to which he probably owed his restoration; and he listened with a docility which Dalibard was not prepared to expect, to his learned secretary's urgent admonitions as to the life he must lead, if he desired to live at all. Convinced, at last, that wine and good cheer had not blockaded out the enemy, and having to do, in Olivier Dalibard, with a very different temper from the doctor's, he assented with a tolerable grace to the trial of a strict regimen and to daily exercise in the open air. Dalibard now became constantly with him—the increase of his influence was as natural as it was apparent. Lucretia trembled; she divined a danger in his power, now separate from her own, and which threatened to be independent of it. She became abstracted and uneasy—jealousy of the Provençal possessed her. She began to meditate schemes for his downfall. At this time, Sir Miles received the following letter from Mr. Fielden:—

"SOUTHAMPTON, August 20th, 1801.

"DEAR SIR MILES,—You will remember that I informed you when I arrived at Southampton, with my dear young charge; and Susan has twice written to her sister, implying the request which she lacked the courage, seeing that she is timid, expressly to urge, that Miss Clavering might again be permitted to visit her. Miss Clavering has answered, as might be expected from the propinquity of the relationship; but she has perhaps the same fears of offending you that actuate her sister. But now, since the worthy clergyman, who had undertaken my parochial duties, has found the air insalubrious, and prays me not to enforce the engagement by which we had exchanged our several

charges for the space of a calendar year, I am reluctantly compelled to return home—my dear wife, thank Heaven, being already restored to health, which is an unspeakable mercy; and I am sure I cannot be sufficiently grateful to Providence, which has not only provided me with a liberal independence of more than two hundred pounds a-year, but the best of wives and the most dutiful of children—possessions that I venture to call ‘the riches of the heart.’ Now, I pray you, my dear Sir Miles, to gratify these two deserving young persons, and to suffer Miss Lucretia incontinently to visit her sister. Counting on your consent, thus boldly demanded, I have already prepared an apartment for Miss Clavering; and Susan is busy in what, though I do not know much of such feminine matters, the whole house declares to be a most beautiful and fanciful toilet cover, with roses and forget-me-nots cut out of muslin, and two large silk tassels, which cost her three shillings and fourpence. I cannot conclude, without thanking you from my heart for your noble kindness to young Ardworth. He is so full of ardour and spirit, that I remember, poor lad, when I left him, as I thought, hard at work on that well-known problem of Euclid, vulgarly called the Asses’ Bridge—I found him describing a figure of 8 on the village pond, which was only just frozen over! Poor lad! Heaven will take care of him, I know, as it does of all who take no care of themselves. Ah, Sir Miles, if you could but see Susan—such a nurse, too, in illness!

“I have the honour to be,

“Sir Miles,

“Your most humble, poor servant
to command,

“MATHEW FIELDEN.”

Sir Miles put this letter in his niece’s hand, and said, kindly, “Why

not have gone to see your sister before?—I should not have been angry. Go, my child, as soon as you like: to-morrow is Sunday—no travelling that day—but the next, the carriage shall be at your order.”

Lucretia hesitated a moment. To leave Dalibard in sole possession of the field, even for a few days, was a thought of alarm; but what evil could he do in that time? And her pulse beat quickly!—Mainwaring could come to Southampton!—she should see him again, after more than six weeks’ absence! She had so much to relate and to hear—she fancied his last letter had been colder and shorter—she yearned to hear him say with his own lips, that “he loved her still!” This idea banished or prevailed over all others. She thanked her uncle cheerfully and gaily, and the journey was settled.

“Be at watch early on Monday,” said Olivier to his son.

Monday came—the baronet had ordered the carriage to be at the door at ten. A little before eight, Lucretia stole out, and took her way to Guy’s Oak. Gabriel had placed himself in readiness; he had climbed a tree at the bottom of the park (near the place where hitherto he had lost sight of her); she passed under it,—on through a dark grove of pollard oaks. When she was at a sufficient distance, the boy dropped from his perch; with the stealth of an Indian, he crept on her trace, following from tree to tree, always sheltered, always watchful; he saw her pause at the dell, and look round—she descended into the hollow; he slunk through the fern—he gained the marge of the dell, and looked down—she was lost to his sight. At length, to his surprise, he saw the gleam of her robe emerge from the hollow of a tree—her head stooped as she came through the aperture; he had time to shrink back amongst the fern; she passed on

hurriedly, the same way she had taken, back to the house; then into the dell crept the boy. Guy's Oak, vast and venerable, with gnarled green boughs below, and sere branches above, that told that its day of fall was decreed at last—rose high from the abyss of the hollow—high and far-seen amidst the trees that stood on the vantage-ground above—even as a great name soars the loftier when it springs from the grave. A dark and irregular fissure gave entrance to the heart of the oak—the boy glided in and looked round—he saw nothing—yet something there must be. The rays of the early sun did not penetrate into the hollow, it was as dim as a cave. He felt slowly in every crevice, and a startled moth or two flew out. It was not for moths that the girl had come to Guy's Oak! He drew back, at last, in despair; as he did so, he heard a low sound close at hand, a low murmuring, angry sound, like a hiss; he looked round, and through the dark, two burning eyes fixed his own—he had startled a snake from its bed. He drew out in time, as the reptile sprang; but now his task, search, and object, were forgotten. With the versatility of a child, his thoughts were all on the enemy he had provoked. That zest of prey which is inherent in man's breast, which makes him love the sport and the chase, and maddens boyhood and age with the passion for slaughter, leapt up within him; anything of danger, and contest, and excitement, gave Gabriel Varney a strange fever of pleasure. He sprang up the sides of the dell, climbed the park pales on which it bordered, was in the wood where the young shoots rose green and strong from the under-wood;—to cut a staff for the strife, to descend again into the dell, creep again through the fissure, look round for those vengeful eyes, was quick done as the joyous play of the im-

pulse. The poor snake had slid down in content and fancied security; its young, perhaps, were not far off; its wrath had been the instinct Nature gives to the mother. It hath done thee no harm yet, boy; leave it in peace! The young hunter had no ear to such whisper of prudence or mercy. Dim and blind in the fissure, he struck the ground and the tree with his stick, shouted out, bade the eyes gleam, and defied them; whether or not the reptile had spent its ire in the first fruitless spring, and this unlooked-for return of the intruder rather daunted than exasperated, we leave those better versed in natural history to conjecture; but, instead of obeying the challenge and courting the contest, it glided by the sides of the oak, close to the very feet of its foe, and, emerging into the light, dragged its grey coils through the grass; but its hiss still betrayed it. Gabriel sprang through the fissure, and struck at the craven, insulting it with a laugh of scorn as he struck. Suddenly it halted, suddenly reared its crest; the throat swelled with venom, the tongue darted out, and again, green as emeralds, glared the spite of its eyes. No fear felt Gabriel Varney; his arm was averted; he gazed spelled and admiringly with the eye of an artist. Had he had pencil and tablet at that moment, he would have dropped his weapon for the sketch, though the snake had been as deadly as the viper of Sumatra. The sight sunk into his memory, to be reproduced often by the wild, morbid fancies of his hand. Scarce a moment, however, had he for the gaze; the reptile sprang, and fell, baffled and bruised by the involuntary blow of its enemy. As it writhed on the grass, how its colours came out—how graceful were the movements of its pail! And still the boy gazed, till the eye was sated, and the cruelty returned. A

blow—a second—a third—all the beauty is gone—shapeless, and clotted with gore, that elegant head; mangled and dissevered the airy spires of that delicate shape, which had glanced in its circling involutions, free and winding as a poet's thought through his verse. The boy trampled the quivering relics into the sod, with a fierce animal joy of conquest, and turned once more towards the hollow, for a last almost hopeless survey. Lo,

his object was found! In his search for the snake, either his staff, or his foot, had disturbed a layer of moss in the corner; the faint ray, ere he entered the hollow, gleamed upon something white. He emerged from the cavity with a letter in his hand: he read the address, thrust it into his bosom, and as stealthily, but more rapidly, than he had come, took his way to his father.

CHAPTER V.

HOUSEHOLD TREASON.

THE Provençal took the letter from his son's hand, and looked at him with an approbation half-complacent, half-ironical. "*Mon fils!*" said he, patting the boy's head gently; "why should we not be friends? We want each other; we have the strong world to fight against."

"Not if you are master of this place."

"Well answered: no; then we shall have the strong world on our side, and shall have only rogues and the poor to make war upon." Then, with a quiet gesture, he dismissed his son, and gazed slowly on the letter. His pulse, which was usually low, quickened, and his lips were tightly compressed; he shrank from the contents with a jealous pang; as a light quivers strugglingly in a noxious vault, love, descended into that hideous breast, gleamed upon dreary horrors, and warred with the noxious atmosphere; but it shone still. To this dangerous man, every art that gives power to the household traitor was familiar; he had no fear that the violated seal should betray the fraud which gave the contents to the eye

that, at length, steadily fell upon the following lines:

"Dearest, and ever dearest,—

"Where art thou at this moment? what are thy thoughts? are they upon me? I write this at the dead of night. I picture you to myself as my hand glides over the paper. I think I see you, as you look on these words, and envy them the gaze of those dark eyes. Press your lips to the paper. Do you feel the kiss that I leave there? Well, well! it will not be for long now that we shall be divided. Oh, what joy, when I think that I am about to see you. Two days more, at most three, and we shall meet—shall we not? I am going to see my sister. I subjoin my address. Come, come, come; I thirst to see you once more. And I did well to say, 'Wait, and be patient;' we shall not wait long: before the year is out, I shall be free. My uncle has had another and more deadly attack. I see its trace in his face, in his step, in his whole form and bearing. The only obstacle between us is fading away. Can I grieve when I think it?—grieve when

life with you spreads smiling beyond the old man's grave? And why should age, that has survived all passion, stand with its chilling frown, and the miserable prejudices the world has not conquered, but strengthened into a creed—why should age stand between youth and youth? I feel your mild eyes rebuke me as I write. But chide me not that on earth I see only you: And it will be mine to give you wealth and rank!—mine to see the homage of my own heart reflected from the crowd who bow not to the statue, but the pedestal. Oh, how I shall enjoy your revenge upon the proud!—for I have drawn no pastoral scenes in my picture of the future. No; I see you leading senates, and duping fools. I shall be by your side, your partner, step after step, as you mount the height, for I am ambitious, you know, William; and not less, because I love: Rather ten thousand times more so. I would not have you born great and noble, for what then could we look to? what use all my schemes, and my plans, and aspirings? Fortune, accident would have taken from us the great zest of life, which is desire.

“When I see you, I shall tell you that I have some fears of Olivier Dalibard: he has evidently some wily project in view. He, who never interfered before with the blundering physician, now thrusts him aside, affects to have saved the old man, attends him always. Dares he think to win an influence, to turn against me?—against us? Happily, when I shall come back, my uncle will probably be restored to the false strength which deceives him, he will have less need of Dalibard, and then—then let the Frenchman beware! I have already a plot to turn his schemes to his own banishment. Come to Southampton, then, as soon as you can—perhaps the day you receive this—on Wednesday, at

farthest. Your last letter implies blame of my policy with respect to Vernon. Again I say, it is necessary to amuse my uncle to the last. Before Vernon can advance a claim, there will be weeping at Loughton. I shall weep, too, perhaps; but there will be joy in those tears, as well as sorrow: for then, when I clasp thy hand, I can murmur, ‘It is mine at last, and for ever!’

“Adieu! no, not adieu—to our meeting, my lover, my beloved!—thy LUCRETIA!”

An hour after Miss Clavering had departed on her visit, Dalibard returned the letter to his son, the seal seemingly unbroken, and bade him replace it in the hollow of the tree, but sufficiently in sight, to betray itself to the first that entered. He then communicated the plan he had formed for its detection—a plan which would prevent Lucretia ever suspecting the agency of his son or himself; and this done, he joined Sir Miles in the gallery. Hitherto, in addition to his other apprehensions in revealing to the baronet Lucretia's clandestine intimacy with Mainwaring, Dalibard had shrunk from the thought, that the disclosure would lose her the heritage which had first tempted his avarice or ambition; but now his jealous and his vindictive passions were aroused, and his whole plan of strategy was changed. He must crush Lucretia, or she would crush him, as her threats declared. To ruin her in Sir Miles's eyes, to expel her from his house, might not, after all, weaken his own position, even with regard to power over herself. If he remained firmly established at Loughton, he could affect intercession, he could delay at least any precipitate union with Mainwaring, by practising on the ambition which he still saw at work beneath her love; he might become a necessary ally, and then,—

why then—his ironical smile glanced across his lips. But beyond this his quick eye saw fair prospects to self-interest — Lucretia banished; the heritage not hers; the will to be altered; Dalibard esteemed indispensable to the life of the baronet! Come, there was hope here, not for the heritage, indeed, but at least for a magnificent bequest.

At noon, some visitors, bringing strangers from London, whom Sir Miles had invited to see the house, (which was one of the lions of the neighbourhood, though not professedly a show place,) were expected. Aware of this, Dalibard prayed the baronet to rest quiet till his company arrived, and then he said, carelessly—

“It will be a healthful diversion to your spirits to accompany them a little in the park—you can go in your garden chair—you will have new companions to talk with by the way; and it is always warm and sunny at the slope of the hill, towards the bottom of the park.”

Sir Miles assented cheerfully: the guests came; strolled over the house, admired the pictures and the armour, and the hall and the staircase: paid due respect to the substantial old-fashioned luncheon; and then, refreshed, and in great good humour, acquiesced in Sir Miles's proposition to saunter through the park.

The poor baronet was more lively than usual. The younger people clustered gaily round his chair (which was wheeled by his valet,) smiling at his jests, and charmed with his courteous high breeding. A little in the rear, walked Gabriel, paying special attention to the prettiest and merriest girl of the company, who was a great favourite with Sir Miles, perhaps for those reasons.

“What a delightful old gentleman!” said the young lady. “How I envy Miss Clavering such an uncle!”

“Ah! but you are a little out of favour to-day, I can tell you,” said Gabriel, laughingly; “you were close by Sir Miles when he went through the picture-gallery, and you never asked him the history of the old knight in the buff doublet and blue sash.”

“Dear me, what of that?”

“Why, that was brave Colonel Guy St. John, the cavalier; the pride and boast of Sir Miles: you know his weakness. He looked so displeased when you said, ‘what a droll looking figure!’ I was on thorns for you!”

“What a pity! I would not offend dear Sir Miles for the world.”

“Well, it's easy to make it up with him. Go, and tell him that he must take you to see Guy's Oak, in the dell, that you have heard so much about it; and when you get him on his hobby, it is hard if you can't make your peace.”

“Oh! I'll certainly do it, Master Varney;” and the young lady lost no time in obeying the hint. Gabriel had set other tongues on the same cry, so that there was a general exclamation, when the girl named the subject—“Oh, Guy's Oak, by all means!”

Much pleased with the enthusiasm this memorial of his pet ancestor produced, Sir Miles led the way to the dell, and, pausing as he reached the verge, said—

“I fear I cannot do you the honours: it is too steep for my chair to descend safely.”

Gabriel whispered the fair companion whose side he still kept to.

“Now, my dear Sir Miles,” cried the girl, “I positively won't stir without you; I am sure we could get down the chair without a jolt. Look there, how nicely the ground slopes! Jane, Lucy, my dears, let us take charge of Sir Miles. Now, then.”

The gallant old gentleman would have marched to the breach in such

guidance: he kissed the fair hands that lay so temptingly on his chair, and then rising with some difficulty, said—

“No, my dears, you have made me so young again, that I think I can walk down the steep with the best of you.”

So, leaning partly on his valet, and by the help of the hands extended to him, step after step, Sir Miles, with well-disguised effort, reached the huge roots of the oak.

“The hollow then was much smaller,” said he, “so he was not so easily detected as a man would be now: the damned crop-ears—I beg pardon, my dears—the rascally rebels, poked their swords through the fissure, and two went, one through his jerkin, one through his arm; but he took care not to swear at the liberty, and they went away, not suspecting him.”

While thus speaking, the young people were already playfully struggling which should first enter the oak. Two got precedence, and went in and out, one after the other. Gabriel breathed hard—“The blind owlets!” thought he, “and I put the letter where a mole would have seen it!”

“You know the spell when you enter an oak tree where the fairies have been,” he whispered to the fair object of his notice. “You must turn round three times, look carefully on the ground, and you will see the face you love best. If I was but a little older, how I should pray!”

“Nonsense!” said the girl, blushing, as she now slid through the crowd, and went timidly in; presently she uttered a little exclamation.

The gallant Sir Miles stooped down to see what was the matter, and offering his hand as she came out, was startled to see her holding a letter.

“Only think what I have found!” said the girl. “What a strange place

for a post-office! Bless me! it is directed to Mr. Mainwaring!”

“Mr. Mainwaring!” cried three or four voices; but the baronet’s was mute. His eye recognised Lucretia’s hand; his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth; the blood surged, like a sea, in his temples; his face became purple. Suddenly Gabriel, peeping over the girl’s shoulder, snatched away the letter.

“It is my letter—it is mine! What a shame in Mainwaring not to have come for it as he promised!”

Sir Miles looked round, and breathed more freely.

“Yours, Master Varney!” said the young lady, astonished. “What can make your letters to Mr. Mainwaring such a secret?”

“Oh! you’ll laugh at me; but—but—I wrote a poem on Guy’s Oak, and Mr. Mainwaring promised to get it into the County Paper for me; and as he was to pass close by the park pales, through the wood yonder, on his way to D—— last Saturday, we agreed that I should leave it here; but he has forgotten his promise. I see.”

Sir Miles grasped the boy’s arm with a convulsive pressure of gratitude. There was a general cry for Gabriel to read his poem on the spot; but the boy looked sheepish, and hung down his head, and seemed rather more disposed to cry than to recite. Sir Miles, with an effort at simulation that all his long practice of the world never could have nerved him to, unexcited by a motive less strong than the honour of his blood and house, came to the relief of the young wit that had just come to his own.

“Nay,” he said, almost calmly, “I know our young poet is too shy to oblige you. I will take charge of your verses, Master Gabriel;” and, with a grave air of command, he took the letter from the boy, and placed it in his pocket.

The return to the house was less gay than the visit to the oak. The baronet himself made a feverish effort to appear blithe and *debonnair* as before; but it was not successful. Fortunately, the carriages were all at the door as they reached the house, and, luncheon being over, nothing delayed the parting compliments of the guests. As the last carriage drove away, Sir Miles beckoned to Gabriel, and bade him follow him into his room.

When there, he dismissed his valet, and said—

“You know, then, who wrote this letter. Have you been in the secret of the correspondence? Speak the truth, my dear boy, it shall cost you nothing.”

“Oh, Sir Miles!” cried Gabriel, earnestly, “I know nothing whatever beyond this—that I saw the hand of my dear kind Miss Lucretia; that I felt, I hardly knew why, that both you and she would not have those people discover it, which they would if the letter had been circulated from one to the other, for some one would have known the hand as well as myself, and therefore I spoke, without thinking, the first thing that came into my head.”

“You—you have obliged me and my niece, sir,” said the baronet, tremulously; and then with a forced and sickly smile, he added—“some foolish vagary of Lucretia’s, I suppose; I must scold her for it. Say nothing about it, however, to any one.”

“Oh no, sir!”

“Good-by, my dear Gabriel!”

“And that boy saved the honour of my niece’s name—my mother’s grandchild! Oh, God! this is bitter!—in my old age, too!”

He bowed his head over his hands, and tears forced themselves through his fingers. He was long before he had courage to read the letter, though he little foreboded all the shock that

it would give him. It was the first letter, not destined to himself, of which he had ever broken the seal. Even that recollection made the honourable old man pause; but his duty was plain and evident, as head of the house, and guardian to his niece. Thrice he wiped his spectacles; still they were dim, still the tears would come. He rose tremblingly, walked to the window, and saw the stately deer grouped in the distance, saw the church spire, that rose above the burial-vault of his ancestors, and his heart sunk deeper and deeper, as he muttered—“Vain pride! pride!” Then he crept to the door, and locked it, and at last, seating himself firmly, as a wounded man to some terrible operation, he read the letter.

Heaven support thee, old man! thou hast to pass through the bitterest trial which honour and affection can undergo;—household treason! When the wife lifts high the blushless front, and brazens out her guilt; when the child, with loud voice, throws off all control, and makes boast of disobedience, man revolts at the audacity; his spirit arms against his wrong; its face, at least, is bare; the blow, if sacrilegious, is direct. But, when mild words and soft kisses conceal the worst foe Fate can arm—when amidst the confidence of the heart starts up the form of Perfidy—when out from the reptile swells the fiend in its terror—when the breast on which man leaned for comfort, has taken counsel to deceive him—when he learns, that day after day, the life entwined with his own has been a lie and a stage-mime, he feels not the softness of grief, nor the absorption of rage; it is mightier than grief, and more withering than rage; it is a horror that appals. The heart does not bleed; the tears do not flow, as in woes to which humanity is commonly subjected; it is as if something that violates the course of nature had taken place;

something monstrous and out of all thought and forewarning; for the domestic traitor is a being apart from the orbit of criminals; the felon has no fear of his innocent children; with a price on his head, he lays it in safety on the bosom of his wife. In his *home*, the ablest man, the most subtle and suspecting, can be as much a dupe as the simplest. Were it not so as the rule, and the exceptions most rare, this world were the riot of a hell!

And therefore it is that to the household perfidy, in all lands, in all ages, God's curse seems to cleave, and to God's curse man abandons it: he does not honour it by hate, still less will he lighten and share the guilt by descending to revenge. He turns aside with a sickness and loathing, and leaves Nature to purify from the earth the ghastly phenomenon she abhors.

Old man, that she wilfully deceived thee—that she abused thy belief—and denied to thy question—and profaned maidenhood to stealth—all this might have galled thee,—but to these wrongs old men are subjected;—they give mirth to our farces;—maid and lover are privileged impostors. But to have counted the sands in thine hour-glass, to have sate by thy side, marvelling when the worms should have thee—and looked smiling on thy face for the signs of the death-writ,—die quick, old man, the executioner hungers for the fee!

There were no tears in those eyes when they came to the close—the letter fell noiselessly to the floor; and

the head sank on the breast, and the hands drooped upon the poor crippled man, whose crawl in the sunshine hard youth had grudged. He felt humbled, stunned—crushed; the pride was clean gone from him; the cruel words struck home—worse than a cipher did he then but cumber the earth? At that moment, old Ponto, the setter, shook himself, looked up, and laid his head in his master's lap; and Dash, jealous, rose also, and sprang, not actively, for Dash was old, too, upon his knees, and licked the numbed drooping hands. Now, people praise the fidelity of dogs till the theme is worn out, but nobody knows what a dog is, unless he has been deceived by men; then, that honest face; then, that sincere caress; then, that coaxing whine that never lied! Well, *then*—what then? A dog is long-lived if he live to ten years—small career this to truth and friendship! Now, when Sir Miles felt that he was not deserted, and his look met those four fond eyes, fixed with that strange wistfulness which, in our hours of trouble, the eyes of a dog sympathisingly assume—an odd thought for a sensible man passed into him—showing, more than pages of sombre elegy, how deep was the sudden misanthropy that blackened the world around. "When I am dead," ran that thought, "is there one human being whom I can trust to take charge of the old man's dogs?"

So—let the scene close!

CHAPTER VI.

THE WILL.

THE next day, or rather the next evening, Sir Miles St. John was seated before his unshared chicken; seated alone, and vaguely surprised at himself, in a large comfortable room in his old Hotel, Hanover-square;—yes, he had escaped. Hast thou, O Reader, tasted the luxury of escape from a home where the charm is broken—where Distrust looks askant from the Lares! In vain had Dalibard remonstrated, conjured up dangers, and asked at least to accompany him. Excepting his dogs and his old valet, who was too like a dog in his fond fidelity to rank amongst bipeds, Sir Miles did not wish to have about him a single face, familiar at Laughton,—Dalibard especially. Lucretia's letter had hinted at plans and designs in Dalibard. It might be unjust, it might be ungrateful, but he grew sick at the thought that he was the centre stone of stratagems and plots. The smooth face of the Provençal took a wily expression in his eyes; nay, he thought his very footmen watched his steps as if to count how long before they followed his bier! So, breaking, from all roughly with a shake of his head, and a laconic assertion of business in London, he got into his carriage—his own old bachelor's lumbering travelling carriage—and bade the post-boys drive fast, fast. Then, when he felt alone—quite alone—and the gates of the lodge swung behind him, he rubbed his hands with a schoolboy's glee, and chuckled loud, as if he enjoyed not only the sense but the fun of his

safety—as if he had done something prodigiously cunning and clever.

So when he saw himself snug in his old well-remembered hotel, in the same room as of yore—when returned, brisk and gay, from the breezes of Weymouth, or the *brouillards* of Paris, he thought he shook hands again with his youth. Age and lameness, apoplexy and treason, all were forgotten for the moment. And when, as the excitement died, those grim spectres came back again to his thoughts, they found their victim braeed and prepared, standing erect on that hearth, for whose hospitality he paid his guinea a-day—his front, proud and defying. He felt yet that he had fortune and power, that a movement of his hand could raise and strike down, that, at the verge of the tomb, he was armed, to punish or reward, with the balance and the sword. Tripped in the smug waiter, and announced “Mr. Parchmount.”

“Set a chair, and show him in.”

The lawyer entered.

“My dear Sir Miles, this is indeed a surprise. What has brought you to town?”

“The common whim of the old, sir. I would alter my will.”

Three days did lawyer and client devote to the task, for Sir Miles was minute, and Mr. Parchmount was precise; and little difficulties arose, and changes in the first outline were made; and Sir Miles, from the very depth of his disgust, desired not to act only from passion. In that last deed of his life, the old man was

sublime. He sought to rise out of the mortal, fix his eyes on the Great Judge, weigh circumstances and excuses, and keep justice even and serene.

Meanwhile, unconscious of the train laid afar, Lucretia reposed on the mine—*repose!*, indeed, is not the word, for she was agitated and restless, that Mainwaring had not obeyed her summons. She wrote to him again from Southampton the third day of her arrival; but before his answer came, she received this short epistle from London:

“Mr. Parchmount presents his compliments to Miss Clavering, and, by desire of Sir Miles St. John, requests her not to return to Laugh-ton. Miss Clavering will hear further in a few days, when Sir Miles has concluded the business that has brought him to London.”

This letter, if it excited much curiosity, did not produce alarm. It was natural that Sir Miles should be busy in winding up his affairs: his journey to London for that purpose was no ill omen to her prospects, and her thoughts flew back to the one subject that tyrannised over them. Mainwaring's reply, which came two days afterwards, disquieted her much more. He had not found the letter she had left for him in the tree. He was full of apprehensions; he condemned the imprudence of calling on her at Mr. Fielden's; he begged her to renounce the idea of such a risk. He would return again to Guy's Oak, and search more narrowly—had she changed the spot where the former letters were placed? Yet now, not even the non-receipt of her letter, which she ascribed to the care with which she had concealed it amidst the dry leaves and moss, disturbed her so much as the evident constraint with which Mainwaring wrote—the cautious and lukewarm remonstrance which answered her passionate appeal.

It may be, that her very doubts, at times, of Mainwaring's affection had increased the ardour of her own attachment; for in some natures, the excitement of fear deepens love more than the calmness of trust. Now with the doubt for the first time flashed the resentment, and her answer to Mainwaring was vehement and imperious. But the next day came a messenger express from London, with a letter from Mr. Parchmount, that arrested for the moment even the fierce current of love.

When the task had been completed—the will signed, sealed, and delivered—the old man had felt a load lifted from his heart. Three or four of his old friends, *bons vivans* like himself, had seen his arrival duly proclaimed in the newspapers, and had hastened to welcome him. Warmed by the genial sight of faces associated with the frank joys of his youth, Sir Miles, if he did not forget the prudent counsels of Dalibaid, conceived a proud bitterness of joy in despising them. Why take such care of the worn out carcass? His will was made. What was left to life so peculiarly attractive? He invited his friends to a feast worthy of old seasoned revellers were they, with a free gout for a vent to all indulgence. So they came; and they drank, and they laughed, and they talked back their young days: they saw not the nervous irritation, the strain on the spirits, the heated membrane of the brain, which made Sir Miles the most jovial of all. It was a night of nights—the old fellows were lifted back into their chariots or sedans. Sir Miles alone seemed as steady and sober as if he had supped with Diogenes. His servant, whose respectful admonitions had been awed into silence, lent him his arm to bed, but Sir Miles scarcely touched it. The next morning, when the servant (who slept in the same room) awoke,

to his surprise, the glare of a candle streamed on his eyes; he rubbed them: could he see right?—Sir Miles was seated at the table—he must have got up, and lighted a candle to write—noiselessly, indeed. The servant looked and looked, and the stillness of Sir Miles awed him: he was seated on an arm-chair, leaning back. As awe succeeded to suspicion, he sprang up, approached his master, took his hand: it was cold, and fell heavily from his clasp—Sir Miles must have been dead for hours.

The pen lay on the ground, where it had dropped from the hand; the letter on the table was scarcely commenced; the words ran thus—

“LUCRETIA,—You will return no more to my house. You are free as if I were dead; but I shall be just. *Would* that I had been so to your mother—to your sister! But I am old now, as you say, and ——”

To one who could have seen into that poor, proud heart, at the moment the hand paused for ever, what remained unwritten would have been clear. There, was first, the sharp struggle to conquer loathing repugnance, and address at all, the false and degraded one; then came the sharp sting of ingratitude—then the idea of the life grudged, and the grave desired—then the stout victory over scorn—the resolution to be just—then the reproach of the conscience, that for so far less an offence, the sister had been thrown aside—the comfort, perhaps, found in her gentle and neglected child, obstinately repelled—then the conviction of all earthly vanity and nothingness—the look on into life, with the chilling sentiment that affection was gone—that he could never trust again—that he was too old to open his arms to new ties; and then, before felt singly, all these thoughts united, and snapped the chord!

In announcing his mournful intelligence, with more feeling than might have been expected from a lawyer (but even his lawyer loved Sir Miles,) Mr. Parchmount observed, ‘that as the deceased lay at an hotel, and as Miss Clavering’s presence would not be needed in the performance of the last rites, she would probably forbear the journey to town. Nevertheless, as it was Sir Miles’s wish that the will should be opened as soon as possible after his death, and it would doubtless, contain instructions as to his funeral, it would be well that Miss Clavering and her sister should immediately depute some one to attend the reading of the testament, on their behalf. Perhaps Mr. Fielden would kindly undertake that melancholy office.’

To do justice to Lucretia, it must be said, that her first emotions, on the receipt of this letter, were those of a poignant and remorseful grief, for which she was unprepared. But how different it is to count on what shall follow death, and to know that death has come! Susan’s sobbing sympathy availed not, nor Mr. Fielden’s pious and tearful exhortations; her own sinful thoughts and hopes came back to her, haunting and stern as furies. She insisted at first upon going to London—gazing once more on the clay: nay, the carriage was at the door, for all yielded to her vehemence; but then her heart misgave her: she did not dare to face the dead! Conscience waved her back from the solemn offices of nature; she hid her face with her hands, shrunk again into her room; and Mr. Fielden, assuming unbidden the responsibility, went alone.

Only Vernon (summoned from Brighton), the good clergyman, and the lawyer, to whom, as sole executor, the will was addressed, and in whose custody it had been left, were present when the seal of the testament was

broken. The will was long, as is common when the dust that it disposes of covers some fourteen or fifteen thousand acres. But out of the mass of technicalities and repetitions, these points of interest rose salient—To Charles Vernon, of Vernon Grange, Esq., and his heirs by him lawfully begotten, were left all the lands and woods and manors that covered that space in the Hampshire map, known by the name of the “Laughton property,” on condition that he and his heirs assumed the name and arms of St. John; and on the failure of Mr. Vernon’s issue, the estate passed, first (with the same conditions) to the issue of Susan Mivers; next, to that of Lucretia Clavering. There the entail ceased—and the contingency fell to the rival ingenuity of lawyers in hunting out, amongst the remote and forgotten descendants of some ancient St. John, the heir-at-law. To Lucretia Clavering, without a word of endearment, was bequeathed 10,000*l.*, the usual portion which the house of St. John had allotted to its daughters; to Susan Mivers the same sum, but with the addition of these words, withheld from her sister—“*and my blessing!*” To Oliver Dalibard, an annuity of 200*l.* a-year; to Honoré Gabriel Varney, 3000*l.*; to the Rev. Matthew Fielden, 4000*l.*; and the same sum to John Walter Ardworth. To his favourite servant, Henry Jones, an ample provision, and the charge of his dogs Dash and Ponto, with an allowance therefor, to be paid weekly, and cease at their deaths. Poor old man! he made it the interest of their guardian not to grudge *their* lees of life. To his other attendants, suitable and munificent bequests, proportioned to the length of their services. For his body, he desired it buried in the vault of his ancestors without pomp, but without a pretence to a humility which he had not manifested

in life; and he requested that a small miniature in his writing-desk should be placed in his coffin. That last injunction was more than a sentiment, it bespoke the moral conviction of the happiness the original might have conferred on his life;—of that happiness his pride had deprived him; nor did he repent, for he had deemed pride a duty; but the mute likeness, buried in his grave—that told the might of the sacrifice he had made! Death removes all distinctions, and in the coffin the Lord of Laughton might choose his partner.

When the will had been read, Mr. Parchmount produced two letters, one addressed in the hand of the deceased to Mr. Vernon, the other in the lawyer’s own hand to Miss Clavering. The last enclosed the fragment found on Sir Miles’s table, and her own letter to Mainwaring, re-directed to her in Sir Miles’s boldest and stateliest autograph. He had, no doubt, meant to return it in the letter left uncompleted.

The letter to Vernon contained a copy of Lucretia’s fatal epistle, and the following lines to Vernon himself:

“MY DEAR CHARLES,—With much deliberation, and with natural reluctance to reveal to you my niece’s shame, I feel it my duty to transmit to you the accompanying enclosure, copied from the original with my own hand, which the task sullied. I do so first, because otherwise, you might, as I should have done in your place, feel bound in honour to persist in the offer of your hand—feel bound the more, because Miss Clavering is not my heiress; secondly, because had her attachment been stronger than her interest, and she had refused your offer, you might still have deemed her hardly and capriciously dealt with by me, and not only sought to augment her portion, but have profaned the house of my ancestors

by receiving her there, as an honoured and welcomed relative and guest. Now, Charles Vernon, I believe, to the utmost of my poor judgment, I have done what is right and just. I have taken into consideration, that this young person has been brought up as a daughter of my house, and what the daughters of my house have received, I bequeath her; I put aside, as far as I can, all resentment of mere family pride; I show that I do so, when I repair my harshness to my poor sister, and leave *both* her children the same provision. And if you exceed what I have done for Lucretia, unless, on more dispassionate consideration than I can give, you conscientiously think me wrong, you insult my memory and impugn my justice; be it in this as your conscience dictates; but I entreat, I adjure, I command at least, that you never knowingly admit by a hearth, hitherto sacred to unblemished truth and honour, a person who has desecrated it with treason. As gentleman to gentleman, I impose on you this solemn injunction. I could have wished to leave that young woman's children barred from the entail; but our old tree has so few branches! You are unwedded; Susan, too. I must take my chance that Miss Clavering's children, if ever they inherit, do not imitate the mother. I conclude she will wed that Mainwaring; her children will have a low-born father. Well, *her* race, at least, is pure. Clavering and St. John are names to guarantee faith and honour; yet you see what *she* is!—Charles

Vernon, if her issue inherit the soul of gentlemen, it must come, after all, not from the well-born mother! I have lived to say this; I, who—but perhaps if we had looked more closely into the pedigree of those Claverings!—

“Marry yourself—marry soon, Charles Vernon, my dear kinsman—keep the old house in the old line, and true to its old fame. Be kind and good to my poor—don't strain on the tenants. By the way, Farmer Strongbow owes three years' rent—I forgive him—pension him off—he can do no good to the land, but he was born on it, and must not fall on the parish. But to be kind and good to the poor, not to strain on the tenants, you must learn not to waste, my dear Charles. A needy man can never be generous without being unjust. How give, if you are in debt? You will think of this—now—*now*—while your good heart is soft—while your feelings are moved. Charley Vernon, I think you will shed a tear when you see my arm-chair still and empty. And I would have left you the care of my dogs, but you are thoughtless, and will go much to London, and they are used to the country now. Old Jones will have a cottage in the village; he has promised to live there; drop in now and then, and see poor Ponto and Dash. It is late, and old friends come to dine here. So, if anything happens to me, and we don't meet again, good bye, and God bless you.

“Your affectionate kinsman,
“MILES ST. JOHN.”

CHAPTER VII.

THE ENGAGEMENT.

It is somewhat less than three months after the death of Sir Miles St. John—November reigns in London. And “reigns” seems scarcely a metaphysical expression as applied to the sullen, absolute, sway, which that dreary Month—(first in the dynasty of Winter)—spreads over the passive, dejected city. Elsewhere, in England, November is no such gloomy grim fellow as he is described. Over the brown glebes and changed woods in the country, his still face looks contemplative and mild, and he has soft smiles, too, at times—lighting up his taxed vassals the groves—gleaming where the leaves still cling to the boughs—and reflected in dimples from the waves which still glide free from his chains. But as a conqueror, who makes his home in the capital, weighs down with hard policy the mutinous citizens, long ere his iron influence is felt in the province, so the first tyrant of Winter has only rigour and frowns for London. The very aspect of the wayfarers has the look of men newly enslaved; cloaked and muffled, they steal to and fro through the dismal fogs. Even the children creep timidly through the streets; the carriages go cautious and hearse-like along; daylight is dim and obscure; the town is not filled, nor the brisk mirth of Christmas commenced; the unsocial shadows flit amidst the mist, like men on the eve of a fatal conspiracy. Each other month in London has its charms for the experienced. Even from August to October, when The Season lies dormant, and Fashion forbids her sons to be seen without hearing of Bow, the true lover of London finds pleasure still at home if he search for her duly;—the cart walks through the parks and green Kensington Gardens, which now change their character of resort, and seem rural and countrylike, but yet with more life than the country; for on the benches beneath the trees, and along the sward and up the malls, are living beings enough to interest the eye and divert the thoughts, if you are a guesser into character, and amateur of the human face; fresh nursery-maid and playful children, and the old shabby-genteel buttoned up officer, musing on half-pay, as he sits alone in some alcove of Keena, or leans pensive over the rail of the vacant Ring; and early tradesman, or clerk from the suburban lodging, trudging brisk to his business, for business never ceases in London; then at noon, what delight to escape to the banks at Putney or Richmond—the row up the river—the fishing-punt—the ease at your inn till dark!—or, if this tempt not, still, Autumn shines clear and calm over the roofs, where the smoke has a holiday; and how clean gleam the vistas through the tranquillised thoroughfares, and as you saunter along, you have all London to yourself, Andrew Selkirk, but with the mart of the world for your desert! And when October comes on, it has one characteristic of spring, life busily returns to the city; you see the shops bustling up, trade flowing back; as birds scent the April, so the children of commerce

plume their wings, and prepare for the first slack returns of the season. But November!—strange the taste, stout the lungs, grief-defying the heart of the visitor who finds charms and joy in a London November.

In a small lodging-house in Bulstrode-street, Manchester-square, grouped a family in mourning, who had had the temerity to come to town in November, for the purpose, no doubt, of raising their spirits. In the dull small drawing-room of the dull small house, we introduce to you, first, a middle aged gentleman, whose dress showed, what dress now fails to show—his profession; nobody could mistake the cut of the cloth, and the shape of the hat, for he had just come in from a walk, and not from discourtesy, but abstraction, the broad brim still shadowed his pleasant placid face. Parson spoke out in him, from beaver to buckle. By the coal fire, where, through volumes of smoke, fussed and flickered a pretension to flame, sate a middle-aged lady, whom, without being a conjuror, you would pronounce at once to be wife to the parson, and sundry children sate on stools all about her, with one book between them, and a low whispered murmur from their two or three pursed-up lips, announcing that that book was superfluous. By the last of three dim-looking windows, made dimmer by brown moreen draperies, edged genteelly with black cotton velvet, stood a girl of very soft and pensive expression of features—pretty, unquestionably—excessively pretty—but there was something so delicate and elegant about her—the bend of her head, the shape of her slight figure, the little fair hands crossed one on each other, as the face mournfully and listlessly turned to the window—that ‘pretty’ would have seemed a word of praise, too often proffered to milliner and serving maid; nevertheless, it was perhaps the right

one;—handsome would have implied something statelier and more commanding—beautiful, greater regularity of feature, or richness of colouring. The parson, who, since his entrance, had been walking up and down the small room, with his hands behind him, glancing now and then at the young lady, but not speaking, at length paused from that monotonous exercise, by the chair of his wife, and touched her shoulder. She stopped from her work, which, more engrossing than elegant, was nothing less than what is technically called “the taking in” of a certain blue jacket, which was about to pass from Matthew, the eldest born, to David, the second, and looked up at her husband affectionately; her husband however spoke not, he only made a sign, partly with his eyebrow, partly with a jerk of his thumb over his right shoulder, in the direction of the young lady we have described, and then completed the pantomime with a melancholy shake of the head. The wife turned round, and looked hard, the scissors horizontally raised in one hand, while the other reposed on the cuff of the jacket. At this moment a low knock was heard at the street door. The worthy pair saw the girl shrink back, with a kind of tremulous movement; presently there came the sound of a footstep below—the creak of a hinge on the ground floor—and again, all was silent.

“That is Mr. Mainwaring’s knock.” said one of the children.

The girl left the room abruptly, and, light as was her step, they heard her steal up the stairs.

“My dears,” said the parson, “it wants an hour yet to dark, you may go and walk in the square.”

“’Tis so dull in that ugly square, and they won’t let us into the green. I am sure we’d rather stay here,” said one of the children, as spokesman

for the rest, and they all nestled closer round the hearth.

"But, my dears," said the parson, simply, "I want to talk alone with your mother. However, if you like best to go and keep quiet in your own room, you may do so."

"Or we can go into Susan's?"

"No," said the parson; "you must not disturb Susan."

"She never *used* to care about being disturbed. I wonder what's come to her?"

The parson made no rejoinder to this half-petulant question. The children consulted together a moment, and resolved that the square, though so dull, was less dull than their own little attic. That being decided, it was the mother's turn to address them. And though Mr. Fielden was as anxious and fond as most fathers, he grew a little impatient before comforters, kerchiefs, and muffatees were arranged, and minute exordiums as to the danger of crossing the street, and the risk of patting strange dogs, &c. &c., were half-way concluded;—with a shrug and a smile, he at length fairly pushed out the children, shut the door, and drew his chair close to his wife's.

"My dear," he began at once, "I am extremely uneasy about that poor girl."

"What! Miss Clavering? Indeed, she eats almost nothing at all, and sits so moping alone; but she sees Mr. Mainwaring every day. What can *we* do? She is so proud, I'm afraid of her."

"My dear, I was not thinking of Miss Clavering, though I did not interrupt you, for it is very true that she is much to be pitied."

"And I am sure it was for her sake alone that you agreed to Susan's request, and got Blackman to do duty for you at the vicarage, while we all came up here, in hopes London town would divert her. We left all at

sixes and sevens; and I should not at all wonder if John made away with the apples."

"But, I say," resumed the parson, without heeding that mournful foreboding—"I say, I was then only thinking of Susan. You see how pale and sad she is grown."

"Why, she is so very soft-hearted, and she must feel for her sister."

"But her sister, though she thinks much, and keeps aloof from us, is not sad herself; only reserved. On the contrary, I believe she has now got over even poor Sir Miles's death."

"And the loss of the great property!"

"Fie, Mary!" said Mr. Fielden, almost austere.

Mary looked down, rebuked, for she was not one of the high spirited wives who despise their husbands for goodness.

"I beg pardon, my dear," she said, meekly; "it was very wrong in me; but I cannot—do what I will—I cannot like that Miss Clavering."

"The more need to judge her with charity. And if what I fear is the ease, I'm sure we can't feel too much compassion for the poor blinded young lady."

"Bless my heart, Mr. Fielden, what is it you mean?"

The parson looked round to be sure the door was quite closed, and replied, in a whisper—"I mean, that I fear William Mainwaring loves not Lucretia, but Susan."

The scissors fell from the hand of Mrs. Fielden; and though one point stuck in the ground, and the other point threatened war upon flounces and toes, strange to say, she did not even stoop to remove the *chevaux de frise*.

"Why, then, he's a most false-hearted young man!"

"To blame, certainly," said Fielden; "I don't say to the contrary, though I like the young man, and am sure

that he's more timid than false. I may now tell you—for I want your advice, Mary—what I kept secret before. When Mainwaring visited us, many months ago, at Southampton, he confessed to me that he felt warmly for Susan, and asked if I thought Sir Miles would consent. I knew too well how proud the poor old gentleman was to give him any such hopes. So he left very honourably. You remember, after he went, that Susan's spirits were low—you remarked it."

"Yes, indeed, I remember. But when the first shock of Sir Miles's death was over, she got back her sweet colour, and looked cheerful enough."

"Because, perhaps, then she felt that she had a fortune to bestow on Mr. Mainwaring, and thought all obstacle was over."

"Why, how clever you are! How did you get at her thoughts?"

"My own folly—my own rash folly," almost groaned Mr. Fielden. "For, not guessing that Mr. Mainwaring could have got engaged meanwhile to Lucretia, and suspecting how it was with Susan's poor little heart, I let out, in a jest—Heaven forgive me!—what William had said; and the dear child blushed, and kissed me, and—why a day or two after, when it was fixed that we should come up to London, Lucretia informed me, with her freezing politeness, that she was to marry Mainwaring herself, as soon as her first mourning was over."

"Poor, dear—dear Susan!"

"Susan behaved like an angel; and when I broached it to her, I thought she was calm; and I am sure she prayed with her whole heart that both might be happy."

"I'm sure she did. What is to be done? I understand it all now. Dear me, dear me!—a sad piece of work, indeed." And Mrs. Fielden abstractedly picked up the scissors.

"It was not till our coming to

town, and Mr. Mainwaring's visits to Lucretia, that her strength gave way."

"A hard sight to bear: I never could have borne it, my love. If I had seen you paying court to another, I should have—I don't know what I should have done! But what an artful wretch this young Mainwaring must be."

"Not very artful; for you see that he looks even sadder than Susan. He got entangled somehow, to be sure. Perhaps he had given up Susan in despair; and Miss Clavering, if haughty, is no doubt a very superior young lady; and, I dare say, it is only now in seeing them both together, and comparing the two, that he feels what a treasure he has lost. Well, what do you advise, Mary? Mainwaring, no doubt, is bound in honour to Miss Clavering; but she will be sure to discover, sooner or later, the state of his feelings, and then I tremble for both. I'm sure she will never be happy, while he will be wretched; and Susan—I dare not think upon Susan—she has a cough that goes to my heart."

"So she has; that cough—you don't know the money I spend on black-currant jelly! What's my advice? why I'd speak to Miss Clavering at once, if I dared. I'm sure love never will break *her* heart; and she's so proud, she'd throw him off without a sigh, if she knew how things stood."

"I believe you are right," said Mr. Fielden; "for truth is the best policy after all. Still, it's scarce my business to meddle; and if it were not for Susan—well, well, I must think of it, and pray Heaven to direct me."

This conference suffices to explain to the reader the stage to which the history of Lucretia had arrived. Willingly we pass over what it were scarcely possible to describe—her first shock at the fall from the expectations of her life;—fortune,

rank, and what she valued more than either, power—crushed at a blow. From the dark and sullen despair into which she was first plunged, she was roused into hope—into something like joy—by Mainwaring's letters. Never had they been so warm and so tender; for the young man felt not only poignant remorse that he had been the cause of her downfall (though she broke it to him with more delicacy than might have been expected from the state of her feelings and the hardness of her character), but he felt also imperiously the obligations which her loss rendered more binding than ever. He persuaded, he urged, he forced himself into affection; and, probably, without a murmur of his heart, he would have gone with her to the altar, and, once wedded, custom and duty would have strengthened the chain imposed on himself, had it not been for Lucretia's fatal eagerness to see him, to come up to London, where she induced him to meet her—for with her came Susan; and in Susan's averted face, and trembling hand, and mute avoidance of his eye, he read all which the poor dissembler fancied she concealed. But the die was cast, the union announced, the time fixed, and day by day he came to the house, to leave it in anguish and despair. A feeling they shared in common caused these two unhappy persons to shun each other. Mainwaring rarely came into the usual sitting-room of the family; and when he did so, chiefly in the evening, Susan usually took refuge in her own room. If they met, it was by accident, on the stairs, or at the sudden opening of a door; then not only no word, but scarcely even a look was exchanged; neither had the courage to face the other. Perhaps, of the two, this reserve weighed most on Susan; perhaps she most yearned to break the silence, for she thought she divined the cause of Mainwaring's gloomy and

mute constraint, in the upbraidings of his conscience, which might doubtless recal—if no positive pledge to Susan—at least, those words and tones which betray the one heart, and seek to allure the other; and the profound melancholy stamped on his whole person, apparent even to her hurried glance, touched her with a compassion free from all the bitterness of selfish reproach. She fancied she could die happy if she could remove that cloud from his brow, that shadow from his conscience. Die—for she thought not of life. She loved gently, quietly; not with the vehement passion that belongs to stronger natures; but it was the love of which the young and the pure have died. The face of the Genius was calm and soft; and only by the lowering of the hand do you see that the torch burns out, and that the image too serene for earthly love, is the genius of loving Death.

Absorbed in the egotism of her passion—increased, as is ever the case with women, even the worst, by the sacrifices it had cost her—and if that passion paused, by the energy of her ambition, which already began to scheme and re-construct new scaffolds to repair the ruined walls of the past, Lucretia as yet had not detected what was so apparent to the simple sense of Mr. Fielden. That Mainwaring was grave, and thoughtful, and abstracted, she ascribed only to his grief at the thought of her loss, and his anxieties for her altered future; and in her efforts to console him, her attempts to convince him that greatness in England did not consist only in lands and manors—that in the higher walks of life which conduct to the Temple of Renown, the leaders of the procession are the aristocracy of knowledge and of intellect—she so betrayed, not generous emulation and high souled aspiring, but the dark, un-erupulous, tortuous ambition of

cunning, stratagem, and intrigue, that instead of feeling grateful and encouraged, he shuddered and revolted. How, accompanied and led by a spirit which he felt to be stronger and more commanding than his own—how preserve the whiteness of his soul, the uprightness of his honour? Already he felt himself debased. But in the still trial of domestic intercourse, with the daily, hourly dripping on the stone, in the many struggles between truth and falsehood, guile and candour, which men—and, above all, ambitious men—must wage, what darker angel would whisper him in his monitor? Still he was bound—bound with an iron band—he writhed, but dreamed not of escape.

The day after that of Fielden's conference with his wife, an unexpected visitor came to the house. Olivier Dalibard called. He had not seen Lucretia since she had left Laughton, nor had any correspondence passed between them. He came at dusk, just after Mainwaring's daily visit was over, and Lucretia was still in the parlour which she had appropriated to herself. Her brow contracted as his name was announced, and the maid-servant lighted the candle on the table, stirred the fire, and gave a tug at the curtains. Her eye, glancing from his, round the mean room, with its dingy, horsehair furniture, involuntarily implied the contrast between the past state and the present, which his sight could scarcely help to impress on her. But she welcomed him with her usual stately composure, and without reference to what had been. Dalibard was secretly anxious to discover if she suspected himself of any agency in the detection of the eventful letter, and, assured by her manner that no such thought was yet harboured, he thought it best to imitate her own reserve. He assumed, however, a manner that, far more respectful

than he ever before observed to his pupil, was nevertheless sufficiently kind and familiar to restore them gradually to their old footing; and that he succeeded was apparent, when, after a pause, Lucretia said abruptly—"How did Sir Miles St. John discover my correspondence with Mr. Mainwaring?"

"Is it possible that you are ignorant? Ah, how—how should you know it?" And Dalibard so simply explained the occurrence, in which, indeed, it was impossible to trace the hand that had moved springs which seemed so entirely set at work by an accident, that despite the extreme suspiciousness of her nature, Lucretia did not see a pretence for accusing him. Indeed, when he related the little subterfuge of Gabriel, his attempt to save her by taking the letter on himself, she felt thankful to the boy, and deemed Gabriel's conduct quite in keeping with his attachment to herself. And this accounted satisfactorily for the only circumstance that had ever troubled her with a doubt—viz., the legacy left to Gabriel. She knew enough of Sir Miles to be aware that he would be grateful to any one who had saved the name of his niece, even while most embittered against her, from the shame attached to clandestine correspondence.

"It is strange, nevertheless," said she, thoughtfully, after a pause, "that the girl should have detected the letter, concealed, as it was, by the leaves that covered it."

"But," answered Dalibard, readily, "you see two or three persons had entered before, and their feet must have displaced the leaves."

"Possibly; the evil is now past recall."

"And Mr. Mainwaring? do you still adhere to one who has cost you so much, poor child?"

"In three months more I shall be his wife."

Dalibard sighed deeply, but offered no remonstrance.

"Well," he said, taking her hand with mingled reverence and affection—"well, I oppose your inclinations no more, for *now* there is nothing to risk, you are mistress of your own fortune; and since Mainwaring has talents, that fortune will suffice for a career. Are you at length convinced that I have conquered my folly? that I was disinterested when I incurred your displeasure? If so, can you restore to me your friendship? You will have some struggle with the world, and, with my long experience of men and life, even I, the poor exile, may assist you."

And so thought Lucretia; for with some dread of Dalibard's craft, she yet credited his attachment to herself, and she felt profound admiration for an intelligence more consummate and accomplished than any ever yet submitted to her comprehension. From that time, Dalibard became an habitual visitor at the house; he never interfered with Lucretia's interviews with Mainwaring; he took the union for granted, and conversed with her cheerfully on the prospects before her; he ingratiated himself with the Fieldens, played with the children, made himself at home, and in the evenings when Mainwaring, as often as he could find the excuse, absented himself from the family circle, he contrived to draw Lucretia into more social intercourse with her homely companions than she had before condescended to admit. Good Mr. Fielden rejoiced: here was the very person, the old friend of Sir Miles, the preceptor of Lucretia herself, evidently most attached to her, having influence over her—the very person to whom to confide his embarrassment. One day, therefore, when Dalibard had touched his heart by noticing the paleness of Susan, he took him aside, and told him all. "And now," con-

cluded the pastor, hoping he had found one to relieve him of his dreaded and ungracious task, "don't you think that I—or, rather, you—as so old a friend, should speak frankly to Miss Claverling herself?"

"No, indeed," said the Provençal, quickly; "if we spoke to her she would disbelieve us. She would no doubt appeal to Mainwaring, and Mainwaring would have no choice but to contradict us. Once put on his guard, he would control his very sadness. Lucretia offended, might leave your house, and certainly she would regard her sister as having influenced your confession—a position unworthy Miss Mivers. But do not fear; if the evil be so, it carries with it its inevitable remedy. Let Lucretia discover it herself; but, pardon me, she must have seen, at your first reception of Mainwaring, that he had before been acquainted with you?"

"She was not in the room when we first received Mainwaring, and I have always been distant to him, as you may suppose, for I felt disappointed and displeased. Of course, however, she is aware that we knew him before she did. What of that?"

"Why, do you think then he told her at Laughton of this acquaintance?—that he spoke of Susan? I suspect not."

"I cannot say, I am sure," said Mr. Fielden.

"Ask her that question accidentally, and for the rest be discreet, my dear sir. I thank you for your confidence. I will watch well over my poor young pupil. She must not, indeed, be sacrificed to a man whose affections are engaged elsewhere."

Dalibard trod on air as he left the house; his very countenance had changed; he seemed ten years younger. It was evening; and suddenly, as he came into Oxford-street, he encountered a knot of young men

—noisy and laughing loud—obstructing the pavement, breaking jests on the more sober passengers, and attracting the especial and admiring attention of sundry ladies in plumed hats and scarlet pelisses; for the streets then enjoyed a gay liberty which has vanished from London with the lanterns of the watchmen. Noisiest, and most conspicuous of these descendants of the Mohawks, the sleek and orderly scholar beheld the childish figure of his son. Nor did Gabriel shrink from his father's eye, stern and scornful as it was, but rather braved the glance with an impudent leer.

Right, however, in the midst of the group, strode the Provençal, and laying his hand very gently on the boy's shoulder, he said—"My son, come with me."

Gabriel looked irresolute, and glanced at his companions. Delighted at the prospect of a scene, they now gathered round, with countenances and gestures that seemed little disposed to acknowledge the parental authority.

"Gentlemen," said Dalibard, turning a shade more pale, for though morally most resolute, physically he was not brave—"gentlemen, I must beg you to excuse me—this child is my son!"

"But Art is his mother," replied a tall raw-boned young man, with long tawny hair streaming down from a hat very much battered. "At the juvenile age, the child is consigned to the mother! Have I said it?" and he turned round theatrically to his comrades.

"Bravo!" cried the rest, clapping their hands.

"Down with all tyrants and fathers—hip, hip, hurrah!" and the hideous diapaen nearly split the drum of the ears into which it resounded.

"Gabriel," whispered the father, "you had better follow me, *had you*

not? Reflect!" So saying, he bowed low to the unpropitious assembly, and, as if yielding the victory, stepped aside, and crossed over towards Bond-street.

Before the din of derision and triumph died away, Dalibard looked back, and saw Gabriel behind him.

"Approach, sir," he said, and as the boy stood still, he added; "I promise peace, if you will accept it."

"Peace, then!" answered Gabriel, and he joined his father's side.

"So," said Dalibard, "when I consented to your studying Art, as you call it, under your mother's most respectable brother, I ought to have contemplated what would be the natural and becoming companions of the rising Raffaele I have given to the world."

"I own, sir," replied Gabriel, demurely, "that they are riotous fellows, but some of them are clever, and——"

"And excessively drunk," interrupted Dalibard, examining the gait of his son. "Do you learn that accomplishment also, by way of steadying your hand for the easel?"

"No, sir; I like wine well enough, but I would not be drunk for the world. I see people when they are drunk are mere fools—let out their secrets, and show themselves up."

"Well said," replied the father, almost admiringly; "but a truce with this bantering, Gabriel. Can you imagine that I will permit you any longer to remain with that vagabond Varney, and yon crew of *Fauriens*? You will come home with me; and if you must be a painter, I will look out for a more trustworthy master."

"I shall stay where I am," answered Gabriel, firmly, and compressing his lips with a force that left them bloodless.

"What, boy? do I hear right? Dare you disobey me? Dare you defy?"

"Not in your house, so I will not enter it again."

Dalibard laughed, mockingly.

"*Peste!* but this is modest! You are not of age, yet, Mr. Varney;—you are not free from a father's tyrannical control."

"The law does not own you as my father, I am told, sir; you have said my name rightly—it is Varney, not Dalibard. We have no rights over each other; so at least says Tom Passmore, and his father's a lawyer!"

Dalibard's hand gripped his son's arm fiercely. Despite his pain, which was acute, the child uttered no cry; but he growled beneath his teeth, "Beware! beware!—or my mother's son may avenge her death!"

Dalibard removed his hand, and staggered as if struck. Gliding from his side, Gabriel seized the occasion to escape; he paused, however, midway in the dull lamp-lit kennel, when he saw himself out of reach, and then approaching cautiously, said—"I know I am a boy, but you have made me man enough to take care of myself. Mr. Varney, my uncle, will maintain me—when of age, old Sir Miles has provided for me. Leave me in peace—treat me as free; and I will visit you, help you when you want me—obey you still,—yes, follow your instructions; for I know you are"—he paused—"you are *wise*; but if you seek again to make me your slave, you will only find me your foe. Good night; and remember that a bastard has no father!"

With these words he moved on, and hurrying down the street, turned the corner, and vanished.

Dalibard remained motionless for some minutes—at length, he muttered, "Ay, let him go, he is dangerous!—What son ever revolted even from the worst father, and throve in life!—Food for the gibbet! What matters!"

When next Dalibard visited Lucretia, his manner was changed—the

cheerfulness he had before assumed gave place to a kind of melancholy compassion; he no longer entered into her plans for the future, but would look at her mournfully, start up, and walk away. She would have attributed the change to some return of his ancient passion, but she heard him once murmur with unspeakable pity, "Poor child—poor child!" A vague apprehension seized her—first, indeed, caught from some remarks dropped by Mr. Fielden, which were less discreet than Dalibard had recommended. A day or two afterwards, she asked Mainwaring, carelessly, "why he had never spoken to her at Loughton of his acquaintance with Fielden."

"You asked me that before," he said somewhat sullenly.

"Did I? I forget! But how was it? Tell me again."

"I scarcely know," he replied, confusedly; "we were always talking of each other, or poor Sir Miles—our own hopes and fears."

This was true, and a lover's natural excuse. In the present of love all the past is forgotten.

"Still," said Lucretia, with her sidelong glance—"still, as you must have seen much of my own sister——"

Mainwaring, while she spoke, was at work on a button on his gaiter—(gaiters were then worn tight at the ankle)—the effort brought the blood to his forehead.

"But," he said, still stooping at his occupation, "you were so little intimate with your sister,—I feared to offend. Family differences are so difficult to approach."

Lucretia was satisfied at the moment. For so vast was her stake in Mainwaring's heart, so did her whole heart and soul grapple to the rock left serene amidst the deluge, that she habitually and resolutely thrust from her mind all the doubts that at times invaded it.

"I know," she would often say to herself—"I know he does not love as I do—but man never can, never ought to love as woman! Were I a man, I should scorn myself if I could be so absorbed in one emotion as I am proud to be now—I, poor woman!—I know," again she would think,—*"I know how suspicious and distrustful I am—I must not distrust him—I shall only irritate—I may lose him: I dare not distrust—it would be too dreadful."*

Thus, as a system vigorously embraced by a determined mind, she had schooled and forced herself into reliance on her lover. His words now, we say, satisfied her at the moment; but afterwards, in absence, they were recalled, in spite of herself—in the midst of fears, shapeless and undefined. Involuntarily she began to examine the countenance, the movements, of her sister—to court Susan's society more than she had done—for her previous indifference had now deepened into bitterness. Susan, the neglected and despised, had become her equal—nay, more than her equal—Susan's children would have precedence to her own in the heritage of Laughton! Hitherto she had never deigned to talk to her in the sweet familiarity of sisters so placed—never deigned to confide to her those feelings for her future husband, which burned lone and ardent in the close vault of her guarded heart. Now, however, she began to name him, wind her arm into Susan's, talk of love and home, and the days to come; and as she spoke she read the workings of her sister's face. That part of the secret grew clear almost at the first glance. Susan loved—loved William Mainwaring; but was it not a love hopeless and unreturned? Might not this be the cause that had made Mainwaring so reserved? He might have seen, or conjectured, a conquest he had not

sought; and hence, with manly delicacy, he had avoided naming Susan to Lucretia; and now, perhaps, sought the excuses which at times had chafed and wounded her for not joining the household circle. If one of those who glance over these pages chance to be a person more than usually able and acute—a person who has loved and been deceived—ne or she, no matter which, will perhaps recal those first moments when the doubt, long put off, insisted to be heard; a weak and foolish heart gives way to the doubt at once, not so the subtler and more powerful; it rather, on the contrary, recalls all the little circumstances that justify trust and make head against suspicion; it will not render the citadel at the mere sound of the trumpet; it arms all its forces, and bars its gates on the foe. Hence it is, that the persons most easy to dupe in matters of affection are usually those most astute in the larger affairs of life. Moliere, reading every riddle in the vast complexities of human character, and clinging, in self-imposed credulity, to his profligate wife, is a type of a striking truth. Still, a foreboding, a warning instinct withheld Lucretia from plumbing farther into the depths of her own fears. So horrible was the thought that she had been deceived, that rather than face it, she would have preferred to deceive herself. This poor bad heart shrunk from inquiry—it trembled at the idea of condemnation. She hailed with a sentiment of release that partook of rapture, Susan's abrupt announcement one morning, that she had accepted an invitation from some relations of her father, to spend some time with them at their villa near Hampstead; she was to go the end of the week. Lucretia hailed it, though she saw the cause. Susan shrank from the name of Mainwaring on Lucretia's lips—shrank from the

familiar intercourse so ruthlessly forced on her! With a bright eye, that day, Lucretia met her lover; yet she would not tell him of Susan's intended departure—she had not the courage.

Dalibard was foiled. This contradiction in Lucretia's temper—so suspicious—so determined—puzzled even his penetration. He saw that bolder tactics were required. He waylaid Mainwaring on the young man's way to his lodgings, and, after talking to him on indifferent matters, asked him carelessly, whether he did not think Susan far gone in a decline. Affecting not to notice the convulsive start with which the question was received, he went on—

"There is evidently something on her mind—I observe that her eyes are often red as with weeping—poor girl!—perhaps some silly love affair. However, we shall not see her again before your marriage; she is going away in a day or two; the change of air may possibly yet restore her: I own, though, I fear the worst. At this time of the year, and in your climate, such complaints as I take hers to be are rapid. Good day. We may meet this evening."

Terror-stricken at these barbarous words, Mainwaring no sooner reached his lodgings than he wrote and despatched a note to Fielden, entreating him to call.

The Vicar obeyed the summons, and found Mainwaring in a state of mind bordering on distraction; nor when Susan was named did Fielden's words take the shape of comfort; for he himself was seriously alarmed for her health; the sound of her low cough rang in his ears, and he rather heightened than removed the picture which haunted Mainwaring—Susan, stricken, dying, broken-hearted!

Tortured both in heart and conscience, Mainwaring felt as if he had but one wish left in the world—to see

Susan once more! What to say, he scarce knew; but for her to depart—depart, perhaps, to her grave, believing him coldly indifferent—for her not to know, at least, his struggles, and pronounce his pardon, was a thought beyond endurance. After such an interview both would have new fortitude—each would unite in encouraging the other in the only step left to honour. And this desire he urged upon Fielden with all the eloquence of passionate grief, as he entreated him to permit and procure one last conference with Susan. But this, the plain sense and straightforward conscience of the good man long refused. If Mainwaring had been left in the position to explain his heart to Lucretia, it would not have been for Fielden to object; but to have a clandestine interview with one sister while betrothed to the other, bore in itself a character too equivocal to meet with the simple Vicar's approval.

"What can you apprehend?" exclaimed the young man, almost fiercely—for, harassed and tortured, his mild nature was driven to bay. "Can you suppose that I shall encourage my own misery by the guilty pleadings of unavailing love? All that I ask is the luxury—yes, the luxury, long unknown to me, of candour—to place fairly and manfully before Susan the position in which fate has involved me. Can you suppose that we shall not both take comfort and strength from each other? Our duty is plain and obvious; but it grows less painful, encouraged by the lips of a companion in suffering. I tell you fairly, that see Susan I will and must. I will watch round her home wherever it be—hour after hour—come what may, I will find my occasion. Is it not better that the interview should be under your roof, within the same walls which shelter her sister? *There*, the place itself imposes restraint on despair. Oh, sir, this is no time for

formal scruples—be merciful, I beseech you, not to me, but to Susan. I judge of her by myself. I know that I shall go to the altar more resigned to the future, if for once I can give vent to what weighs upon my heart. She will then see as I do, that the path before me is inevitable, she will compose herself to face the fate that compels us. We shall swear tacitly to each other, not to love, but to conquer love. Believe me, sir, I am not selfish in this prayer: an instinct, the intuition which human grief has into the secrets of human grief, assures me that that which I ask, is the best consolation you can afford to Susan. You own she is ill—suffering. Are not your fears for her very life—O Heaven, for her very life—gravely awakened? And yet you see, we have been silent to each other! Can speech be more fatal in its results than silence? Oh, for her sake hear me!”

The good man's tears fell fast—his scruples were shaken; there was truth in what Mainwaring urged. He did not yield; but he promised to reflect, and inform Mainwaring, by a line, in the evening. Finding this was all he could effect, the young man at last suffered him to leave the house, and Fielden hastened to take counsel of Dalibard; that wily persuader soon reasoned away Mr. Fielden's last faint objection—it now only remained to procure Susan's assent to the interview, and to arrange that it should be undisturbed. Mr. Fielden should take out the children the next morning. Dalibard volunteered to contrive the absence of Lucretia at the hour appointed. Mrs. Fielden, alone, should remain within, and might, if it were judged proper, be present at the interview, which was fixed for the forenoon in the usual drawing-room. Nothing but Susan's consent was now necessary, and Mr. Fielden ascended to her room. He knocked twice—no sweet

voice bade him enter; he opened the door gently—Susan was in prayer. At the opposite corner of the room, by the side of her bed, she knelt, her face buried in her hands, and he heard, low and indistinct, the murmur broken by the sob. But gradually, and, as he stood unperceived, sob and murmur ceased—prayer had its customary and blessed effect with the pure and earnest. And when Susan rose, though the tears yet rolled down her cheeks, the face was serene as an angel's.

The pastor approached, and took her hand;—a blush then broke over her countenance—she trembled, and her eyes fell on the ground. “My child,” he said solemnly, “God will hear you!” And, after those words, there was a long silence. He then drew her passively towards a seat, and sat down by her embarrassed how to begin. At length, he said, looking somewhat aside, “Mr. Mainwaring has made me a request—a prayer which relates to you, and which I refer to you. He asks you to grant him an interview, before you leave us—to-morrow, if you will. I refused at first—I am in doubt still; for, my dear, I have always found that, when the feelings move us, our duty becomes less clear to the human heart—corrupt, we know—but still it is often a safer guide than our reason; I never knew reason unerring, except in mathematics; we have no Euclid (and the good man smiled mournfully) in the problems of real life; I will not urge you one way or the other—I put the case before you. Would it, as the young man says, give you comfort and strength to see him once again while, while—in short, before your sister is—I mean before—that is, would it soothe you *now*, to have an unreserved communication with him? He implores it. What shall I answer?”

“This trial, too!” muttered Susan,

almost inaudibly—"this trial which I once yearned for"—and the hand clasped in Fielden's was as cold as ice; then, turning her eyes to her guardian somewhat wildly, she cried, "But to what end? what object? why should he wish to see me?"

"To take greater courage to do his duty—to feel less unhappy at"—at——

"I will see him," interrupted Susan, firmly, "he is right, it will strengthen both—I will see him!"

"But human nature is weak, my child; if my heart be so now, what will be yours?"

"Fear me not," answered Susan, with a sad wandering smile; and she repeated vacantly, "I will see him!"

The good man looked at her, threw his arms round her wasted form, and, lifting up his eyes, his lips stirred with such half-syllabled words as fathers breathe on high.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DISCOVERY.

DALIBARD had undertaken to get Lucretia from the house; in fact, her approaching marriage rendered necessary a communication with Mr. Parchmount, as executor to her uncle's will, relative to the transfer of her portion; and she had asked Dalibard to accompany her thither, for her pride shrank from receiving the lawyer in the shabby parlour of the shabby lodging-house; she therefore, that evening, fixed the next day, before noon, for the visit. A carriage was hired for the occasion, and, when it drove off, Mr. Fielden took his children a walk to Primrose Hill, and called, as was agreed, on Mainwaring by the way.

The carriage had scarcely rattled fifty yards through the street when Dalibard fixed his eyes, with deep and solemn commiseration, on Lucretia. Hitherto, with masterly art, he had kept aloof from direct explanations with his pupil; he knew that she would distrust no one like himself. The plot was now ripened, and it was time for the main agent to conduct the catastrophe. The look was so expressive that Lucretia felt a

chill at her heart, and could not help exclaiming, "What has happened? you have some terrible tidings to communicate?"

"I have indeed to say that which may, perhaps, cause you to hate me for ever; as we hate those who report our afflictions. I must endure this; I have struggled long between my indignation and my compassion. Rouse up your strong mind, and hear me. Mainwaring loves your sister!"

Lucretia uttered a cry that seemed scarcely to come from a human voice—

"No—no!" she gasped out, "do not tell me. I will hear no more—I will not believe you!"

With an inexpressible pity and softness in his tone, this man, whose career had given him such profound experience in the frailties of the human heart, continued: "I do not ask you to believe me, Lucretia; I would not now speak, if you had not the opportunity to convince yourself; even those with whom you live are false to you; at this moment, they have arranged all, for Mainwaring to steal, in your absence, to your sister; in a few moments more he will be

with her, if you yourself would learn what passes between them, you have the power."

"I have—I have not—not—the courage;—drive on—faster—faster."

Dalibard again was foiled. In this strange cowardice, there was something so terrible, yet so touching, that it became sublime—it was the grasp of a drowning soul at the last plank.

"You are right, perhaps," he said, after a pause; and wisely forbearing all taunt and resistance, he left the heart to its own workings.

Suddenly, Lucretia caught at the check-string—"Stop," she exclaimed—"stop! I will not, I cannot endure this suspense, to last through a life! I will learn the worst. Bid him drive back."

"We must descend and walk; you forget we must enter unsuspected; and Dalibard, as the carriage stopped, opened the door, and let down the steps.

Lucretia recoiled, then pressing one hand to her heart, she descended without touching the arm held out to her.

Dalibard bade the coachman wait, and they walked back to the house.

"Yes, he may see her," exclaimed Lucretia, her face brightening. "Ah, *there* you have not deceived me; I see your stratagem—I despise it; I know she loves him; she has sought this interview. He is so mild and gentle, so fearful to give pain; he has consented, from pity—that is all. Is he not pledged to me? He, so candid, so ingenuous! There must be truth somewhere in the world. If he is false, where find truth? Dark man, must I look for it in you?—*you!*"

"It is not my truth I require you to test; I pretend not to truth universal; I can be true to one, as you may yet discover: but I own your belief is not impossible; my interest in you may have made me rash and

unjust—what you may over-hear, far from destroying, may confirm for ever your happiness. Would that it may be so!"

"It *must* be so," returned Lucretia, with a fearful gloom on her brow and in her accent; "I will interpret every word to my own salvation."

Dalibard's countenance changed, despite his usual control over it. He had set all his chances upon this cast, and it was more hazardous than he had deemed. He had counted too much upon the jealousy of common natures. After all, how little to the ear of one resolved to deceive herself might pass between these young persons, meeting not to avow attachment, but to take courage from each other! what restraint might they impose on their feelings! Still the game must be played out.

As they now neared the house, Dalibard looked carefully round, lest they should encounter Mainwaring on his way to it. He had counted on arriving before the young man could get there.

"But," said Lucretia, breaking silence, with an ironical smile—"but (for your tender anxiety for me has, no doubt, provided all means and contrivance, all necessary aids to baseness and eaves-dropping, that can assure my happiness,) how am I to be present at this interview?"

"I have provided, as you say," answered Dalibard, in the tone of a man deeply hurt, "those means which I, who have found the world one foe and one traitor, deemed the best, to distinguish falsehood from truth. I have arranged that we shall enter the house unsuspected. Mainwaring and your sister will be in the drawing-room—the room next to it will be vacant, as Mr. Fielden is from home; there is but a glass door between the two chambers."

"Enough, enough!" and Lucretia turned round, and placed her hand

lightly on the Provençal's arm. "The next hour will decide whether the means you suggest, to learn truth and defend safety, will be familiar or loathsome to me for life—will decide whether trust is a madness—whether you, my youth's teacher, are the wisest of men, or only the most dangerous."

"Believe me, or not, when I say, I would rather the decision should condemn me; for I, too, have need of confidence in men."

Nothing further was said; the dull street was quiet and desolate as usual. Dalibard had taken with him the key of the house-door. The door opened noiselessly—they were in the house. Mainwaring's cloak was in the hall; he had arrived a few moments before them. Dalibard pointed silently to that evidence in favour of his tale. Lucretia bowed her head, but with a look that implied defiance; and (still without a word) she ascended the stairs, and entered the room appointed for concealment. But as she entered, at the further corner of the chamber she saw Mrs. Fielden seated—seated, remote and out of hearing. The good-natured woman had yielded to Mainwaring's prayer, and Susan's silent look that enforced it, to let their interview be unwitnessed. She did not perceive Lucretia till the last walked glidingly, but firmly, up to her, placed a burning hand on her lips, and whispered—"Hush, betray me not; my happiness for life—Susan's—his—are at stake! I must hear what passes; it is *my* fate that is deciding. Hush—I command!—for I have the right!"

Mrs. Fielden was awed and startled; and before she could recover even breath, Lucretia had quitted her side, and taken her post at the fatal door. She lifted the corner of the curtain from the glass panel, and looked in.

Mainwaring was seated at a little distance from Susan, whose face was

turned from her. Mainwaring's countenance was in full view. But it was Susan's voice that met her ear; and though sweet and low, it was distinct, and even firm. It was evident from the words that the conference had but just begun.

"Indeed, Mr. Mainwaring, you have nothing to explain—nothing of which to accuse yourself. It was not for this, believe me"—and here Susan turned her face, and its aspect of heavenly innocence met the dry lurid eye of the unseen witness—"not for this, believe me, that I consented to see you. If I did so, it was only because I thought—because I feared from your manner, when we met at times, still more from your evident avoidance to meet me at all, that you were unhappy (for I know you kind and honest); unhappy at the thought that you had wounded me, and my heart could not bear that, nor, perhaps, my pride either. That you should have forgotten me——"

"Forgotten you!"

"That you should have been captivated" (continued Susan, in a more hurried tone) "by one so superior to me in all things as Lucretia, is very natural. I thought, then—thought only—that nothing could cloud your happiness but some reproach of a conscience too sensitive. For this I have met you—met you without a thought which Lucretia would have a right to blame, could she read my heart; met you (and the voice for the first time faltered), that I might say, 'Be at peace: it is your sister that addresses you. Requite Lucretia's love—it is deep and strong; give her as she gives to you—a whole heart, and in your happiness, I, your sister—sister to both—I shall be blest.'" With a smile inexpressibly touching and ingenuous, she held out her hand as she ceased. Mainwaring sprang forward, and, despite her struggles, pressed it to his lips—his heart.

"Oh," he exclaimed, in broken accents, which gradually became more clear and loud, "what—what have I lost!—lost for ever! No, no, I will be worthy of you! I do not—I dare not say that I love you still! I feel what I owe to Lucretia. How I became first ensnared, infatuated; how, with your image graven so deeply here——"

"Mainwaring—Mr. Mainwaring—I must not hear you. Is this your promise?"

"Yes, you must hear me yet. How I became engaged to your sister—so different, indeed, from you—I start in amaze and bewilderment when I seek to conjecture. But so it was. For me she has forfeited fortune, rank—all which that proud, stern heart so prized and coveted. Heaven is my witness how I have struggled to repay her affection with my own; if I cannot succeed, at least, all that faith and gratitude can give are hers. Yes; when I leave you, comforted by your forgiveness, your prayers, I shall have strength to tear you from my heart—it is my duty—my fate. With a firm step I will go to these abhorred nuptials. Oh, shudder not; turn not away! Forgive the word; but I must speak—my heart will out—yes, abhorred nuptials! Between my grave and the altar, would—would that I had a choice!"

From this burst, which in vain from time to time Susan had sought to check, Mainwaring was startled by an apparition which froze his veins, as a ghost from the grave. The door was thrown open, and Lucretia stood in the aperture—stood, gazing on him, face to face; and her own was so colourless, so rigid, so locked in its livid and awful solemnity of aspect, that it was, indeed, as one risen from the dead.

Dismayed by the abrupt cry, and the changed face of her lover, Susan

turned and beheld her sister. With the impulse of the pierced and loving heart, which divined all the agony inflicted, she sprang to Lucretia's side—she fell to the ground, and clasped her knees.

"Do not heed—do not believe him: it is but the frenzy of a moment. He spoke but to deceive me—*me*, who loved him once! Mine alone—mine is the crime. He knows all your worth; pity—pity—pity on yourself, on him—on me!"

Lucretia's eyes fell with the glare of a fiend upon the imploring face lifted to her own. Her lips moved, but no sound was audible. At length she drew herself from her sister's clasp, and walked steadily up to Mainwaring. She surveyed him with a calm and cruel gaze, as if she enjoyed his shame and terror. Before, however, she spoke, Mrs. Fielden, who had watched, as one spell-bound, Lucretia's movements, and without hearing what had passed, had the full foreboding of what would ensue, but had not stirred till Lucretia herself terminated the suspense, and broke the charm of her awe,—before she spoke, Mrs. Fielden rushed in, and giving vent to her agitation in loud sobs, as she threw her arms round Susan, who was still kneeling on the floor, brought something of grotesque to the more tragic and fearful character of the scene.

"My uncle was right; there is neither courage nor honour in the low-born! He, the schemer, too, is right. All hollow—all false!" Thus said Lucretia, with a strange sort of musing accent, at first scornful, at last only quietly abstracted. "Rise, sir," she then added, with her most imperious tone; "do you not hear your Susan weep? do you fear in my presence to console her? Coward to her, as forsworn to me. Go, sir, you are free!"

"Hear me," faltered Mainwaring,

attempting to seize her hand ; “ I do not ask you to forgive ; but —— ”

“ Forgive, sir ! ” interrupted Lucretia, rearing her head, and with a look of freezing and unspeakable majesty, “ there is only one person here who needs a pardon ; but her fault is inextinguishable : it is the woman who stooped beneath her ! —— ”

With these words, hurled from her with a scorn which crushed, while it galled, she mechanically drew round her form her black mantle : her eye glanced on the deep mourning of the garment, and her memory recalled all that that love had cost her ; but she added no other reproach. Slowly she turned away : passing Susan, who lay senseless in Mrs. Fielden’s arms, she paused, and kissed her forehead.

“ When she recovers, madam,” she said, to Mrs. Fielden, who was moved and astonished by this softness, “ say, that Lucretia Clavering uttered a vow, when she kissed the brow of William Mainwaring’s future wife ! ”

Oliver Dalibard was still seated in the parlour below when Lucretia entered. Her face yet retained its almost unearthly rigidity and calm ; but a sort of darkness had come over its ashen pallor—that shade so indescribable which is seen in the human face, after long illness, a day or two before death. Dalibard was appalled, for he had too often seen that hue in the dying, not to recognise it now. His emotion was sufficiently genuine to give more than usual earnestness to his voice and gesture, as he poured out every word that spoke sympathy and soothing. For a long time Lucretia did not seem to hear him : at last her face softened—the ice broke.

“ Motherless — friendless — lone — alone for ever — undone — undone ! ” she murmured. Her head sunk upon the shoulder of her fearful counsellor, unconscious of its resting-place, and she burst into tears—tears which, perhaps, saved her reason or her life.

CHAPTER IX.

A SOUL WITHOUT HOPE.

WHEN Mr. Fielden returned home, Lucretia had quitted the house. She left a line for him in her usual bold, clear handwriting, referring him to his wife for explanation of the reasons that forbade a further residence beneath his roof. She had removed to an hotel, until she had leisure to arrange her plans for the future. In a few months, she should be of age; and in the meanwhile, who now living claimed authority over her? For the rest, she added, "I repeat what I told Mr. Mainwaring, all engagement between us is at an end; he will not insult me either by letter or by visit. It is natural that I should at present shrink from seeing Susan Mivers. Hereafter, if permitted, I will visit Mrs. Mainwaring."

Though all had chanced as Mr. Fielden had desired (if, as he once half meditated, he had spoken to Lucretia herself), though a marriage that could have brought happiness to none, and would have made the misery of two, was at an end, he yet felt a bitter pang, almost of remorse, when he learned what had occurred. And Lucretia, before secretly disliked (if any one he could dislike), became dear to him at once, by sorrow and compassion. Forgetting every other person he hurried to the hotel Lucretia had chosen, but her coldness deceived and her pride repelled him. She listened drily to all he said, and merely replied, "I feel only gratitude at my escape. Let this subject now close for ever."

Mr. Fielden left her presence with less anxious and commiserating feelings—perhaps all had chanced for the

best. And, on returning home, his whole mind became absorbed in alarm for Susan. She was delirious and in great danger; it was many weeks before she recovered. Meanwhile, Lucretia had removed into private apartments, of which she withheld the address. During this time, therefore, they lost sight of her.

If, amidst the punishments with which the sombre imagination of poets has diversified the Realm of the tortured Shadows, it had depicted some soul condemned to look evermore down into an abyss—all change to its gaze forbidden—chasm upon chasm, yawning deeper and deeper, darker and darker, endless and infinite: so that, eternally gazing, the soul became, as it were, a part of the abyss, such an image would symbol forth the state of Lucretia's mind.

It was not the mere desolation of one whom love has abandoned and betrayed. In the abyss, were mingled inextricably together, the gloom of the past and of the future—there, the broken fortunes, the crushed ambition, the ruin of the worldly expectations long inseparable from her schemes; and amidst them, the angry shade of the more than father, whose heart she had wrung, and whose old age she had speeded to the grave. These sacrifices to love, while love was left to her, might have haunted her at moments, but a smile, a word, a glance banished the regret and the remorse. Now, love being rased out of life, the ruins of all else loomed dismal amidst the darkness: and a voice rose up, whispering "Lo, Fool! what thou hast lost

because thou didst believe and love!" And this thought grasped together the two worlds of being—the what has been, and the what shall be. All hope seemed stricken from the future as a man strikes from the calculations of his income the returns from a property irrevocably lost. At her age, but few of her sex have parted with religion, but even such mechanical faith as the lessons of her childhood, and the constrained conformities with Christian ceremonies, had instilled, had long since melted away in the hard scholastic scepticism of her fatal tutor—a scepticism which had won, with little effort, a reason delighting in the maze of doubt, and easily narrowed into the cramped and iron logic of disbelief, by an intellect that scorned to submit where it failed to comprehend. Nor had faith given place to those large moral truths from which philosophy has sought to restore the proud statue of pagan Virtue as a substitute for the meek symbol of the Christian cross. By temperament unsocial—nor readily moved to the genial and benevolent—that absolute egotism in which Olivier Dalibard centred his dreary ethics, seemed sanctioned to Lucretia by her studies into the motives of man and the history of the world. She had read the chronicles of states and the memoirs of statesmen, and seen how craft carries on the movements of an age. Those Viscontis, Castruccio, and Medici—those Richelieus, and Mazuins, and de Retzs—those Loyolas, and Mahomets, and Cromwells—those Monks and Godolphins—those Marlboroughs and Walpoles—those founders of history, and dynasties, and sects—those leaders and dupers of men, greater or lesser, corrupters or corrupt—all standing out prominent and renowned from the guiltless and laurelless obscure—seemed to win, by the homage of posterity, the rewards that attend the

deceivers of their time. By a superb arrogance of generalisation, she transferred into private life, and the rule of commonplace actions, the policy that, to the abasement of honour, has so often triumphed in the guidance of states. Therefore, betimes, the whole frame of society was changed to her eye, from the calm aspect it wears to those who live united with their kind—she viewed all seemings with suspicion; and before she had entered the world, prepared to live in it as a conspirator in a city convulsed, spying and espied, schemed against and scheming—here the crown for the crafty, there the axe for the outwitted.

But her love, for love is trust, had led her half way forth from this maze of the intellect. That fair youth of inexperience and candour, which seemed to bloom out in the face of her betrothed—his very shrinking from the schemes so natural to her, that to her they seemed even innocent—his apparent reliance on mere masculine ability, with the plain aids of perseverance and honesty—all had an attraction that plucked her back from herself. If she clung to him, firmly, blindly, credulously, it was not as the lover alone. In the lover, she beheld the good angel. Had he only died to her—still the angel smile would have survived and warned. But the man had not died—the angel itself had deceived;—the wings could uphold her no more—they had touched the mire, and were sullied with the soil;—with the stain, was forfeited the strength. All was deceit and hollowness and treachery. Lone again in the universe, rose the eternal *I*. So down into the abyss she looked, depth upon depth, and the darkness had no relief, and the deep had no end.

Olivier Dalibard alone, of all she knew, was admitted to her seclusion. He played his part as might be expected from the singular patience and penetration which belonged to the

genius of his character. He forbore the most distant allusion to his attachment or his hopes. He evinced sympathy rather, by imitating her silence, than attempts to console. When he spoke, he sought to interest her mind, more than to heal directly the deep wounds of her heart. There is always, to the afflicted, a certain charm in the depth and bitterness of eloquent misanthropy. And Dalibard, who professed not to be a man-hater, but a world-scorner, had powers of language and of reasoning commensurate with his astute intellect and his profound research. His society became not only a relief, it grew almost a want, to that stern sorrower. But, whether alarmed or not by the influence she felt him gradually acquiring, or whether, through some haughty desire to rise once more aloft from the state of her rival and her lover, she made one sudden effort to grasp at the rank from which she had been hurled. The only living person, whose connection could reopen to her the great world, with its splendours and its scope to ambition, was Charles Vernon. She scarcely admitted to her own mind the idea that she would now accept, if offered, the suit she had before despised—she did not even contemplate the renewal of that suit—though there was something in the gallant and disinterested character of Vernon which should have made her believe he would regard their altered fortunes rather as a claim on his honour than a release to his engagements. But hitherto no communication had passed between them, and this was strange if he retained the same intentions which he had announced at Laughton. Putting aside, we say, however, all such considerations, Vernon had sought her friendship, called her “cousin,” enforced the distant relationship between them. Not as lover, but as kinsman, the only kinsman of her own rank she

possessed—his position in the world, his connections, his brilliant range of acquaintance, made his counsel for her future plans, his aid in the re-establishment of her consequence (if not as wealthy, still as well born), and her admission amongst her equals, of price and value. It was worth sounding the depth of the friendship he had offered, even if his love had passed away with the fortune on which doubtless it had been based.

She took a bold step—she wrote to Vernon—not even to allude to what had passed between them: her pride forbade such unwomanly vulgarity. The baseness that was in her, took at least a more delicate exterior. She wrote to him simply and distantly, to state that there were some books and trifles of hers left at Laughton, which she prized beyond their trivial value; and to request, as she believed him to be absent from the hall, permission to call at her old home, in her way to a visit in a neighbouring county, and point out to whomsoever he might appoint to meet her, the effects she deemed herself privileged to claim. The letter was one merely of business, but it was a sufficient test of the friendly feelings of her former suitor.

She sent this letter to Vernon's house in London, and the next day came the answer.

Vernon, we must own, entirely sympathised with Sir Miles, in the solemn injunctions the old man had bequeathed. Immediately after the death of one to whom we owe gratitude and love, all his desires take a sanctity irresistible and ineffable. We adopt his affection, his dislikes, his obligations and his wrongs. And after he had read the copy of Lucretia's letter, enclosed to him by Sir Miles, the conquest the poor baronet had made over resentment and vindictive emotion, the evident effort at passionless justice with which he had provided becomingly for his niece, while he

cancelled her claims as his heiress, had filled Vernon with a reverence for his wishes and decisions, that silenced all those inclinations to over-generosity which an unexpected inheritance is apt to create towards the less fortunate expectants; nevertheless, Lucretia's direct application, her formal appeal to his common courtesy as host and kinsman, perplexed greatly a man ever accustomed to a certain chivalry towards the sex; the usual frankness of his disposition suggested, however, plain dealing as the best escape from his dilemma, and therefore he answered thus:

"MADAM,—Under other circumstances it would have given me no common pleasure to place the house, that you so long inhabited, again at your disposal. And I feel so painfully the position which my refusal of your request inflicts upon me, that rather than resort to excuses and pretexts, which, while conveying an impression of my sincerity, would seem almost like an insult to yourself, I venture frankly to inform you, that it was the dying wish of my lamented kinsman, in consequence of a letter which came under his eye, that the welcome you had hitherto received at Langhton should be withdrawn. Pardon me, Madam, if I express myself thus bluntly—it is somewhat necessary to the vindication of my character in your eyes, both as regards the honour of your request and my tacit resignation of hopes, fervently, but too presumptuously, entertained. In this most painful candour, Heaven forbid that I should add wantonly to your self-reproaches for the fault of youth and inexperience, which I should be the last person to judge rigidly, and which, had Sir Miles's life been spared, you would doubtless have amply repaired. The feelings which actuated Sir Miles in his latter days might have changed; but the injunc-

tion those feelings prompted I am bound to respect.

"For the mere matter of business, on which you have done me the honour to address me, I have only to say, that any orders you may give to the steward, or transmit through any person you may send to the hall, with regard to the effects you so naturally desire to claim, shall be implicitly obeyed.

"And believe me, Madam, (though I do not presume to add those expressions, which might rather heighten the offence I fear this letter will give you,) that the assurance of your happiness in the choice you have made, and which now no obstacle can oppose, will considerably lighten the pain with which I shall long recal my ungracious reply to your communication.

"I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

"C. VERNON ST. JOHN.

Brook Street, Dec. 28th, 18—."

The receipt of such a letter could hardly add to the profounder grief which preyed in the innermost core of Lucretia's heart, but in repelling the effort she had made to distract that grief by ambition, it blackened the sullen despondency with which she regarded the future. As the insect in the hollow snare of the antlion, she felt that there was no footing up the sides of the cave into which she had fallen—the sand gave way to the step. But despondency in her, brought no meekness—the cloud did not descend in rain;—resting over the horizon, its darkness was tinged with the fires which it fed. The heart, already so embittered, was stung and mortified into intolerable shame and wrath. From the home that should have been hers, in which, as acknowledged heiress, she had smiled down on the ruined Vernon, she was banished by him who had supplanted her, as one worthless and polluted.

Though, from motives of obvious delicacy, Vernon had not said expressly that he had seen the letter to Mainwaring, the unfamiliar and formal tone which he assumed, indirectly declared it, and betrayed the impression it had made, in spite of his reserve. A living man then was in possession of a secret which justified his disdain, and that man was master of Laughton! The supprest rage which embraced the lost lover, extended darkly over this witness to that baffled and miserable love. But what availed rage against either? Abandoned and despoiled, she was powerless to avenge. It was at this time, when her prospects seemed most dark, her pride was most crushed, and her despair of the future at its height, that she turned to Dalibard as the only friend left to her under the sun. Even the vices she perceived in him became merits, for they forbade him to despise her. And now, this man rose suddenly into another and higher aspect of character: of late, though equally deferential to her, there had been something more lofty in his mien, more assured on his brow; gleams of a secret satisfaction, even of a joy, that he appeared anxious to suppress, as ill in harmony with her causes for dejection, broke out in his looks and words. At length, one day, after some preparatory hesitation, he informed her that he was free to return to France—that even without the peace between England and France, which (known under the name of the Peace of Amiens), had been just concluded, he should have crossed the channel. The advocacy and interest of friends, whom he had left at Paris, had already brought him under the special notice of the wonderful man who then governed France, and who sought to unite in its service every description and variety of intellect. He should return to France, and then

—why, then, the ladder was on the walls of Fortune and the foot planted on the step! As he spoke, confidently and sanguinely, with the verve and assurance of an able man who sees clear the path to his goal, as he sketched with rapid precision the nature of his prospects and his hopes, all that subtle wisdom which had before often seemed but vague and general, took practical shape and interest, thus applied to the actual circumstances of men; the spirit of intrigue, which seemed mean when employed on mean things, swelled into statesmanship and masterly genius to the listener, when she saw it linked with the large objects of masculine ambition. Insensibly, therefore, her attention became earnest—her mind aroused. The vision of a field, afar from the scenes of her humiliation and despair—a field for energy, stratagem, and contest—invited her restless intelligence. As Dalibard had profoundly calculated, there was no new channel for her affections—the source was dried up, and the parched sands heaped over it; but while the heart lay dormant, the mind rose, sleepless, chafed, and perturbed. Through the mind, he indirectly addressed and subtly wooed her.

“Such”—he said, as he rose to take leave—“such is the career, to which I could depart with joy if I did not depart alone!”

“Alone!” that word, more than once that day, Lucretia repeated to herself—“alone!”—and what career was left to her—she, *too*, alone!

In certain stages of great grief, our natures yearn for excitement. This has made some men gamblers; it has made even women drunkards—it had effect over the serene calm, and would-be divinity of the Poet-sage. When his son dies, Goethe does not mourn—he plunges into the absorption of a study, uncultivated before.

But, in the great contest of life, in the whirlpool of actual affairs, the stricken heart finds all—the gambling, the inebriation, and the study.

We pause here. We have pursued long enough that patient analysis, with all the food for reflection that it possibly affords to which we were insensibly led on by an interest, dark

and fascinating, that grew more and more upon us, as we proceeded in our research into the early history of a person fated to pervert no ordinary powers into no commonplace guilt.

The charm is concluded—the circle closed round—the self-guided seeker after knowledge has gained the field for the familiar.

CHAPTER X.

THE RECONCILIATION BETWEEN FATHER AND SON.

WE pass over an interval of some months.

A painter stood at work at the easel; his human model before him. He was employed on a nymph—the Nymph Galatea. The subject had been taken before by Salvator, whose genius found all its elements in the wild rocks, gnarled fantastic trees, and gushing waterfalls of the landscape—in the huge ugliness of Polyphemus the lover—in the grace and suavity and unconscious abandonment of the nymph, sleeking her tresses dripping from the bath. The painter, on a larger canvas (for Salvator's picture, at least, the one we have seen, is among the small sketches of the great artistic creator of the romantic and grotesque), had transferred the subject of the master: but he had left subordinate the landscape and the giant, to concentrate all his art on the person of the Nymph. Middle-aged was the painter, in truth; but he looked old. His hair, though long, was grey and thin; his face was bloated by intemperance; and his hand trembled much, though from habit no trace of the tremor was visible in his work.

A boy, near at hand, was also employed on the same subject, with a rough chalk and a bold freedom of touch. He was sketching *his* design of a Galatea and Polyphemus on the wall; for the wall was only white-washed, and covered already with the multifarious vagaries whether of master or pupils; caricatures and demigods, hands and feet, torsos and monsters, and Venuses—the rude creations, all

mutilated, jarring, and mingled, gave a cynical, mocking, devil-may-care kind of aspect to the sanctum of art. It was like the dissection-room of the anatomist. The boy's sketch was more in harmony with the walls of the studio than the canvas of the master. His nymph, accurately drawn from the undressed proportions of the Model down to the waist, terminated in the scales of a fish. The forked branches of the trees stretched weird and imp-like as the hands of skeletons. Polyphemus, peering over the rocks, had the leer of a demon; and in his gross features there was a certain distorted, hideous likeness of the grave and symmetrical lineaments of Olivier Dalibard.

All around was slovenly, squalid, and poverty-stricken; rickety, worn-out, rush-bottom chairs; unsold, unfinished pictures, pell-mell in the corner, covered with dust; broken casts of plaster; a lay-figure battered in its basket-work arms, with its doll-like face, all smudged and besmeared; a pot of porter and a noggin of gin on a stained deal table, accompanied by two or three broken, smoke-blackened pipes, some tattered song-books, and old numbers of the Covent-garden Magazine, betrayed the tastes of the artist, and accounted for the shaking hand and the bloated form. A jovial, disorderly, vagrant dog of a painter, was Tom Varney!—a bachelor, of course—humorous and droll—a boon companion, and a terrible borrower; clever enough in his calling; with pains and some method, he had easily gained subsistence and

established a name; but he had one trick that soon ruined him in the business-part of his profession. He took a fourth of his price in advance; and having once clutched the money, the poor customer might go hang for his picture! The only things Tom Varney ever fairly completed were those for which no order had been given; for in them, somehow or other, his fancy became interested, and on them he lavished the gusto which he really possessed. But the subjects were rarely saleable. Nymphs and deities undraped have few worshippers in England amongst the buyers of "furniture pictures." And, to say truth, nymph and deity had usually a very equivocal look; and if they came from the gods, you would swear it was the gods of the galleries of Drury. When Tom Varney sold a picture, he lived upon clover till the money was gone. But the poorer and less steady alumni of the rising school, especially those at war with the Academy from which Varney was excluded, pitied, despised, yet liked and courted him withal. In addition to his good qualities of blithe song-singer, droll story-teller, and staunch Bacchanalian, Tom Varney was liberally good-natured in communicating instruction really valuable to those who knew how to avail themselves of a knowledge he had made almost worthless to himself. He was a shrewd, though good-natured critic, had many little secrets of colouring and composition, which an invitation to supper, or the loan of ten shillings, was sufficient to bribe from him. Ragged, out of elbows, unshaven, and slipshod, he still had his set, amongst the gay and the young—a precious master, a profitable set, for his nephew, Master Honoré Gabriel! But the poor rapscallion had a heart larger than many honest painstaking men. As soon as Gabriel had found him out, and entreated refuge from

his fear of his father, the painter clasped him tight in his great slovenly arms, sold a Venus half-price, to buy him a bed and a wash-stand, and swore a tremendous oath, "that the son of his poor guillotined sister should share the last shilling in his pocket—the last drop in his can."

Gabriel, fresh from the cheer of Laughton, and spoiled by the prodigal gifts of Lucretia, had little gratitude for shillings and porter. Nevertheless, he condescended to take what he could get, while he sighed, from the depths of a heart in which cupidity and vanity had become the predominant rulers, for a destiny more worthy his genius, and more in keeping with the sphere from which he had descended.

The boy finished his sketch, with an impudent wink at the model, flung himself back on his chair, folded his arms, cast a discontented glance at the whitened seams of the sleeves, and soon seemed lost in his own reflections. The painter worked on in silence. The model, whom Gabriel's wink had aroused, half-flattered, half-indignant for a moment, lapsed into a doze. Outside the window, you heard the song of a canary—a dingy, smoke-coloured canary—that seemed shedding its plumes, for they were as ragged as the garments of its master; still it contrived to sing—trill-trill-trill-trill-trill, as blithely as if free in its native woods, or pampered by fair hands in a gilded cage. The bird was the only true artist there: it sang, as the poet sings, to obey its nature and vent its heart. Trill-trill trille-la-la trill-trill, went the song—louder, gayer than usual—for there was a gleam of April sunshine, struggling over the roof-tops. The song at length roused up Gabriel; he turned his chair round, laid his head on one side, listened, and looked curiously at the bird.

At length, an idea seemed to cross

him: he rose, opened the window, drew in the cage, placed it on the chair, then took up one of his uncle's pipes, walked to the fire-place, and thrust the shank of the pipe into the bars. When it was red-hot, he took it out by the bowl, having first protected his hand from the heat by wrapping round it his handkerchief; this done, he returned to the cage. His movements had wakened up the dozing model. She eyed them at first with dull curiosity, then with lively suspicion; and presently starting up with an exclamation, such as no novelist but Fielding dare put into the mouth of a female—much less a nymph of such renown as Galatea—she sprang across the room, well-nigh upsetting easel and painter, and fastened firm hold on Gabriel's shoulders.

"The varment!" she cried, vehemently; "the good-for-nothing varment! If it had been a jay, or a nasty raven, well and good!—but a poor little canary!"

"Hoity-toity! what are you about, nephew? What's the matter!" said Tom Varney, coming up to the strife. And, indeed, it was time, for Gabriel's teeth were set in his cat-like jaws, and the glowing point of the pipe-shank was within an inch of the cheek of the model.

"What's the matter?" replied Gabriel, sullenly; "why, I was only going to try a little experiment."

"An experiment? not on my canary, poor, dear little thing!—the hours and hours that creature has strained its throat to say—'sing and be merry,' when I had not a rap in my pocket! It would have made a stone feel to hear it."

"But I think I can make it sing much better than ever—only just let me try! They say, that if you put out the eyes of a canary, it——" Gabriel was not allowed to conclude his sentence; for here rose that

clamour of horror and indignation, from both painter and model, which usually greets the announcement of every philosophical discovery—at least, when about to be practically applied; and in the midst of the hubbub, the poor little canary, who had been fluttering about the cage to escape the hand of the benevolent operator, set up no longer the cheerful trill—trillela-la-trill, but a scared and heart-breaking chirp—a shrill, terrified twit-twit-twitter-twit.

"Damn the bird!—hold your tongues!" cried Gabriel Varney, reluctantly giving way; but still eyeing the bird with the scientific regret with which the illustrious Majendie might contemplate a dog which some brute of a master refused to disembowel for the good of the colics of mankind.

The model seized on the cage, shut the door of the wires, and carried it off. Tom Varney drained the rest of his porter, and wiped his forehead with the sleeve of his coat.

"And to use my pipe for such cruelty! Boy, boy, I could not have believed it! But you were not in earnest—oh, no, impossible! Sukey, my love—Galatea, the divine—calm thy breast; Cupid did but jest:

"Cupid is the God of Laughter,
Quip, and jest, and joke, sir."

"If you don't whip the little wretch within an inch of his life, he'll have a gallows end on't," replied Galatea.

"Go, Cupid, go and kiss Galatea, and make your peace:

"Oh, leave a kiss within the cup,
And I'll not ask for wine!"

And 'tis no use asking for wine, or for gin either—not a drop in the noggin!"

All this while, Gabriel, disdaining the recommendations held forth to

him, was employed in brushing his jacket with a very mangy-looking brush; and when he had completed that operation, he approached his uncle, and coolly thrust his hands into that gentleman's waistcoat-pockets.

"Uncle, what have you done with those seven shillings? I am going out to spend the day."

"If you give them to him, Tom, I'll scratch your eyes out," cried the model; "and then we'll see how *you'll* sing. Whip him, I say—whip him!"

But, strange to say, this liberty of the boy's quite re-opened the heart of his uncle—it was a pleasure to him, who put his hands so habitually into other people's pockets, to be invested with the novel grandeur of the man sponged upon. "That's right, Cupid, son of Cytherea; all's common property amongst friends. Seven shillings, I have 'em not! 'They now are five who once were seven;' but such as they are, we'll share!"

"Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown."

"Crowns bear no division, my uncle," said Gabriel, drily—and he pocketed the five shillings. Then, having first secured his escape, by gaining the threshold, he suddenly seized one of the rickety chairs by its leg, and regardless of the gallantries due to the sex, sent it right against the model, who was shaking her fist at him. A scream, and a fall, and a sharp tait from the cage, which was hurled nearly into the fire place, told that the missile had taken effect. Gabriel did not wait for the probable reaction; he was in the streets in an instant.

"This won't do," he muttered to himself; "there is no getting on here. Foolish, drunken vagabond! no good to be got from him. My father is terrible, but he will make

his way in the world. Umph! if I were but his match—and why not? I am brave, and he is not. There's fun, too, in danger."

Thus musing, he took his way to Dalibard's lodgings. His father was at home. Now, though they were but lodgings, and the street not in fashion, Olivier Dalibard's apartments had an air of refinement, and even elegance, that contrasted both the wretched squalor of the abode Gabriel had just left, and the meanness of Dalibard's former quarters in London. The change seemed to imply that the Provençal had already made some way in the world. And, truth to say, at all times, even in the lowest ebb of his fortunes, there was that indescribable neatness and formality of precision about all the exterior seemings of the *ciderant* friend of the prim Robespierre which belong to those in whom order and method are strongly developed—qualities which give even to neediness a certain dignity. As the room and its owner met the eye of Gabriel, on whose senses all externals had considerable influence, the ungrateful young ruffian recalled the kind, tattered slovenly uncle, whose purse he had just emptied, without one feeling milder than disgust. Olivier Dalibard, always careful, if simple, in his dress, with his brow of grave intellectual power and his mien imposing, not only from its calm, but from that nameless refinement which rarely fails to give to the student the air of a gentleman—Olivier Dalibard he might dread—he might even detest; but he was not ashamed of him.

"I said I would visit you, sir, if you would permit me," said Gabriel, in a tone of respect, not unmingled with some defiance, as if in doubt of his reception.

The father's slow full eye, so different from the sidelong furtive glance of Lucretia, turned on the

son, as if to penetrate his very heart.

"You look pale and haggard, child: you are fast losing your health and beauty. Good gifts these, not to be wasted before they can be duly employed. But you have taken your choice. Be an artist—copy Tom Varney, and prosper."

Gabriel remained silent, with his eyes on the floor.

"You come in time for my farewell," resumed Dalibard. "It is a comfort, at least, that I leave your youth so honourably protected. I am about to return to my country—my career is once more before me!"

"Your country—to Paris?"

"There are fine pictures in the Louvre—a good place to inspire an artist!"

"You go alone, father!"

"You forget, young gentleman, you disown me as father! Go alone! I thought I told you in the times of our confidence, that I should marry Lucretia Clavering. I rarely fail in my plans. She has lost Langhton, it is true, but ten thousand pounds will make a fair commencement to fortune, even at Paris. Well, what do you want with me, worthy godson of Honoré Gabriel Mirabeau?"

"Sir, if you will let me, I will go with you."

Dalibard shaded his brow with his hand, and reflected on the filial proposal. On the one hand, it might be convenient, and would certainly be economical to rid himself evermore of the mutinous son who had already thrown off his authority; on the other hand, there was much in Gabriel, mutinous and even menacing as he had lately become, that promised an unscrupulous tool or a sharp-witted accomplice, with interests that every year the ready youth would more and more discover were bound up in his plotting father's. This last consideration, joined, if not to affection

still to habit—to the link between blood and blood, which even the hardest find it difficult to sever, prevailed. He extended his pale hand to Gabriel, and said, gently—

"I will take you, if we rightly understand each other. Once again in my power, I might constrain you to my will, it is true. But I rather confer with you as man to man than as man to boy."

"It is the best way," said Gabriel, firmly.

"I will use no harshness—inflict no punishment, unless, indeed, amply merited by stubborn disobedience or wilful deceit. But if I meet with these, better rot on a dunghill than come with me! I ask implicit confidence in all my suggestions, prompt submission to all my requests. Grant me but these, and I promise to consult your fortune as my own—to gratify your tastes as far as my means will allow—to grudge not your pleasures; and, when the age for ambition comes, to aid your rise if I rise myself; nay, if well contented with you, to remove the blot from your birth, by acknowledging and adopting you formally as my son."

"Agreed! and I thank you," said Gabriel. "And Lucretia is going, oh, I so long to see her!"

"See her—not yet; but next week."

"Do not fear that I should let out about the letter. I should betray myself if I did," said the boy, bluntly betraying his guess at his father's delay.

The evil scholar smiled.

"You will do well to keep it secret for your own sake; for mine, I should not fear. Gabriel, go back now to your master—you do right, like the rats, to run from the falling house. Next week, I will send for you, Gabriel!"

Not, however, back to the studio went the boy. He sauntered leisurely

through the gayest streets, eyed the shops, and the equipages, the fair women, and the well-dressed men—eyed with envy, and longings, and visions of pomps, and vanities to come; then, when the day began to close, he sought out a young painter, the wildest and maddest of the crew to whom his uncle had presented their future comrade and rival, and went with this youth, at half-price, to the theatre, not to gaze on the actors or study the play, but to stroll in the saloon. A supper in the *Finish* completed the void in his pockets, and concluded his day's rank experience of life. By the grey dawn he stole back to his bed, and as he laid himself down, he thought with avid pleasure of Paris, its gay gardens, and brilliant shops, and crowded streets; he thought, too, of his father's calm confidence of success, of the triumph that already had attended his wiles—a confidence and a triumph which, exciting his reverence and rousing his emulation, had decided his resolution. He thought, too, of Lucretia, with something of affection, recalled her praises and bribes, her frequent mediation with his father,

and felt that they should have need of each other. Oh, no, he never would tell her of the snare laid at Guy's Oak—never, not even if incensed with his father! An instinct told him that that offence could never be forgiven, and that, henceforth, Lucretia's was a destiny bound up in his own. He thought, too, of Dali-bard's warning and threat. But, with fear itself, came a strange excitement of pleasure—to grapple, if necessary, he a mere child, with such a man!—his heart swelled at the thought. So, at last he fell asleep, and dreamed that he saw his mother's trunkless face dripping gore, and frowning on him—dreamed that he heard her say: "Goest thou to the scene of my execution only to fawn upon my murderer?" Then a night-mare of horrors, of scaffolds, and executioners, and grinning mobs, and agonised faces, came on him—dark, confused and indistinct. And he woke, with his hair standing on end, and heard below, in the rising sun, the merry song of the poor canary—trill-lill-lill, trill-trill-lill-lill-la? Did he feel glad that his cruel hand had bear stayed.

EPILOGUE TO PART THE FIRST.

It is a year since the November day on which Lucretia Clavering quitted the roof of Mr. Fielden. And first we must recal the eye of the reader to the old-fashioned terrace at Laughton: the jutting porch, the quaint balustrades, the broad, dark, changeless cedars on the lawn beyond. The day is calm, clear and mild, for November in the country is often a gentle month. On that terrace walked Charles Vernon, now known by his new name of St. John. Is it the change of name that has so changed the person? Can the wand of the Herald's Office have filled up the hollows of the cheek, and replaced by elastic vigour the listless languor of the tread? No; there is another and a better cause for that healthful change. Mr. Vernon St. John is not alone—a fair companion leans on his arm. See, she pauses to press closer to his side, gaze on his face, and whisper, "We did well to have hope and faith!"

The husband's faith had not been so unshaken as his Mary's, and a slight blush passed over his cheek as he thought of his concession to Sir Miles's wishes, and his overtures to Lucretia Clavering. Still that fault had been fairly acknowledged to his wife, and she felt, the moment she had spoken, that she had committed an indiscretion; nevertheless, with an arch touch of womanly malice, she added softly,—

"And Miss Clavering, you persist in saying, was not really handsome?"

"My love," replied the husband, gravely, "you would oblige me by not recalling the very painful recollections connected with that name."

Let it never be mentioned in this house."

Lady Mary bowed her graceful head in submission—she understood Charles's feelings. For though he had not shown her Sir Miles's letter and its enclosure, he had communicated enough to account for the unexpected heritage, and to lessen his wife's compassion for the disappointed heiress. Nevertheless, she comprehended that her husband felt an uneasy twinge at the idea that he was compelled to act hardly to the one whose hopes he had supplanted. Lucretia's banishment from Laughton was a just humiliation, but it humbled a generous heart to inflict the sentence. Thus, on all accounts, the remembrance of Lucretia was painful and unwelcome to the successor of Sir Miles. There was a silence—Lady Mary pressed her husband's hand.

"It is strange," said he, giving vent to his thoughts at that tender sign of sympathy in his feeling—"strange that, after all, she did not marry Mainwaring, but fixed her choice on that supple Frenchman. But she has settled abroad now, perhaps for life—a great relief to my mind. Yes, let us never recur to her."

"Fortunately," said Lady Mary, with some hesitation, "she does not seem to have created much interest here. The poor seldom name her to me, and our neighbours only with surprise at her marriage. In another year she will be forgotten!"

Mr. St. John sighed. Perhaps he felt how much more easily he had been forgotten, were he the banished one, Lucretia the possessor! His

light nature, however, soon escaped from all thoughts and sources of annoyance, and he listened with complacent attention to Lady Mary's gentle plans for the poor, and the children's school, and the cottages that ought to be repaired, and the labourers that ought to be employed. For, though it may seem singular, Vernon St. John, insensibly influenced by his wife's meek superiority, and corrected by her pure companionship, had begun to feel the charm of innocent occupations;—more, perhaps, than if he had been accustomed to the larger and loftier excitements of life, and missed that stir of intellect which is the element of those who have warred in the democracy of letters, or contended for the leadership of states. He had begun already to think that the country was no such exile after all. Naturally benevolent, he had taught himself to share the occupations his Mary had already found in the busy 'luxury of doing good,' and to conceive that brotherhood of charity which usually unites the lord of the village with its poor.

"I think, what with hunting once a week,—(I will not venture more till my pain in the side is quite gone,)—and with the help of some old friends at Christmas, we can get through the winter very well, Mary."

"Ah, those old friends! I dread them more than the hunting!"

"But we'll have your grave father, and your dear, precise, excellent mother, to keep us in order. And if I sit more than half an hour after dinner, the old butler shall pull me out by the ears. Mary, what do you say to thinning the grove yonder? We shall get a better view of the landscape beyond. No, hang it! dear old Sir Miles loved his trees better than the prospect—I won't lop a bough. But that avenue we are planting will be certainly a noble improvement——"

"Fifty years hence, Charles!"

"It is our duty to think of posterity," answered the *ci-devant* spend-thrift, with a gravity that was actually pompous. "But hark! is that two o'clock! Three, by Jove! How time flies! and my new bullocks that I was to see at two! Come down to the farm, that's my own Mary. Ah, your fine ladies are not such bad housewives after all!"

"And your fine gentlemen——"

"Capital farmers! I had no idea till last week that a prize ox was so interesting an animal. One lives to learn. Put me in mind, by-the-by, to write to Coke about his sheep."

"This way, dear Charles; we can go round by the village, and see poor Ponto and Dash."

The tears rushed to Mr. St. John's eyes. "If poor Sir Miles could have known you!" he said, with a sigh; and, though the gardeners were at work on the lawn, he bowed his head, and kissed the blushing cheek of his wife as heartily as if he had been really a farmer.

From the terrace at Laughton, turn to the humbler abode of our old friend the Vicar—the same day, the same hour. Here also the scene is without doors—we are in the garden of the vicarage; the children are playing at hide and seek amongst the espaliers, which screen the winding gravel walks from the esculents more dear to Ceres than to Flora. The Vicar is seated in his little parlour, from which a glazed door admits into the garden. The door is now open, and the good man has paused from his work (he had just discovered a new emendation in the first chorus of the *Medea*), to look out at the rosy faces that gleam to and fro across the scene. His wife, with a basket in her hand, is standing without the door, but a little aside, not to obstruct the view.

"It does one's heart good to see

them!" said the Vicar; "little dears!"

"Yes, they ought to be dear at this time of the year," observed Mrs. Fielden, who was absorbed in the contents of the basket.

"And so fresh!"

"Fresh, indeed!—how different from London! In London they were not fit to be seen; as old as—I am sure I can't guess how old they were. But you see here they are new laid every morning!"

"My dear!" said Mr. Fielden, opening his eyes—"new laid every morning!"

"Two dozen and four."

"Two dozen and four!—What on earth are you talking about, Mrs. Fielden?"

"Why the eggs to be sure, my love!"

"Oh!" said the Vicar, "two dozen and four!—you alarmed me a little; 'tis of no consequence—only my foolish mistake. Always prudent and saving, my dear Sarah; just as if poor Sir Miles had not left us that munificent fortune, I may call it."

"It will not go very far when we have our young ones to settle. And—David is very extravagant already: he has torn such a hole in his jacket!"

At this moment, up the gravel walk, two young persons came in sight. The children darted across them, whooping and laughing, and vanished in the further recess of the garden.

"All is for the best—blind mortals that we are!—all is for the best!" said the Vicar, musingly, as his eyes rested upon the approaching pair.

"Certainly, my love; you are always right, and it is wicked to grumble. *Still*, if you saw what a hole it was—past patching, I fear!"

"Look round!" said Mr. Fielden, benevolently. "How we grieved for them both; how wroth we were with

William—how sad for Susan! And now see them—they will be the better man and wife for their trial!"

"Has Susan then consented? I was almost afraid she never would consent. How often have I been almost angry with her, poor lamb! when I have heard her accuse herself of causing her sister's unhappiness, and declare with sobs that she felt it a crime to think of William Mainwaring as a husband."

"I trust I have reasoned her out of a morbid sensibility, which, while it could not have rendered Lucretia the happier, must have ensured the wretchedness of herself and William. But if Lucretia had not married, and so for ever closed the door on William's repentance (that is, supposing he *did* repent), I believe poor Susan would rather have died of a broken heart, than have given her hand to Mainwaring."

"It was an odd marriage of that proud young lady's, after all," said Mrs. Fielden; "so much older than her—a foreigner, too!"

"But he is a very pleasant man, and they had known each other so long. I did not, however, quite like a sort of cunning he showed, when I came to reflect on it, in bringing Lucretia back to the house; it looks as if he had laid a trap for her from the first."

"Ten thousand pounds!—a great catch for a foreigner!" observed Mrs. Fielden, with the shrewd instinct of her sex; and then she added, in the spirit of a prudent sympathy equally characteristic: "But I think you say Mr. Parchmount persuaded her to allow half to be settled on herself. That will be a hold on him."

"A bad hold, if that be all, Sarah. There is a better—he is a learned man, and a scholar. Scholars are naturally domestic, and make good husbands."

"But you know he must be a papist!" said Mrs. Fielden.

"Umph!" muttered the Vicar, irresolutely.

While the worthy couple were thus conversing, Susan and her lover, not having finished their conference, had turned back through the winding walk.

"Indeed," said William, drawing her arm closer to his side, "these scruples—these fears—are cruel to me as well as to yourself. If you were no longer existing, I could be nothing to your sister. Nay, even were she not married, you must know enough of her pride to be assured that I can retain no place in her affections. What has chanced was not our crime. Perhaps Heaven designed to save, not only us, but herself, from the certain misery of nuptials so inauspicious!"

"If she would but answer one of my letters!" sighed Susan; "or if I could but know that she were happy and contented!"

"Your letters must have miscarried—you are not sure even of her address. Rely upon it she is happy. Do you think that she would, a second time 'have stooped beneath her'?"—Mainwaring's lip writhed as he repeated that phrase—"if her feelings had not been involved? I would not wrong your sister—I shall ever feel gratitude for the past, and remorse for my own shameful weakness—still I must think that the nature of her attachment to me was more ardent than lasting."

"Ah, William! how can you know her heart?"

"By comparing it with yours. Oh, there, indeed, I may anchor my faith! Susan, we were formed for each other! Our natures are alike—save that yours, despite its surpassing sweetness, has greater strength in its simple candour. You will be my guide to good. Without you I should have no aim in life—no courage to

front the contests of this world. Ah, this hand trembles still!"

"William, William, I cannot repress a foreboding—a superstition! At night, I am haunted with that pale face, as I saw it last,—pale with suppressed despair. Oh, if ever Lucretia could have need of us—need of our services, our affections—if we could but repair the grief we have caused her!"

Susan's head sank on her lover's shoulder. She had said "need of *us*"—"need of *our* services." In those simple monosyllables the union was pledged—the identity of their lots in the dark urn was implied.

From this scene turn again—the slide shifts in the lantern—we are at Paris. In the ante-chamber at the Tuileries, a crowd of expectant courtiers and adventurers gaze upon a figure who passes with modest and downcast eyes through the throng; he has just left the closet of the First Consul.

"*Par Dieu!*" said B——, "power, like misery, makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows. I should like to hear what the First Consul can have to say to Olivier Dalibard."

Fouché, who at that period was scheming for the return to his old dignities as minister of police, smiled slightly, and answered, "In a time when the air is filled with daggers, one who was familiar with Robespierre has his uses. Olivier Dalibard is a remarkable man. He is one of those children of the Revolution, whom that great mother is bound to save."

"By betraying his brethren?" said B——, drily.

"I do not allow the inference. The simple fact is that Dalibard has spent many years in England—he has married an Englishwoman of birth and connexions—he knows well the English language and English people—and just now, when the First Consul is so anxious to *approfondir*

the popular feelings of that strange nation, with whose government he is compelled to go to war, he may naturally have much to say to so acute an observer as Olivier Dalibard."

"Um!" said B——; "with such patronage, Robespierre's friend should hold his head somewhat higher!"

Meanwhile, Olivier Dalibard, crossing the gardens of the palace, took his way to the Faubourg St. Germain. There was no change in the aspect of this man; the same meditative tranquillity characterised his downward eyes and bended brow; the same precise simplicity of dress which had pleased the prim taste of Robespierre, gave decorum to his slender stooping form. No expression more cheerful, no footstep more elastic, bespoke the exile's return to his native land, or the sanguine expectations of Intellect restored to a career. Yet, to all appearance, the prospects of Dalibard were bright and promising. The First Consul was at that stage of his greatness, when he sought to employ in his service all such talent as the Revolution had made manifest—provided only, that it was not stained with notorious bloodshed, or too strongly associated with the Jacobin clubs. His quick eye seemed to have discovered already the abilities of Dalibard, and to have appreciated the sagacity and knowledge of men which had enabled this subtle person to obtain the friendship of Robespierre, without sharing in his crimes. He had been frequently closeted with Buonaparte; he was in the declared favour of Fouché, who, though not at that period at the head of the Police, was too necessary amidst the dangers of the time, deepened as they were by the rumours of some terrible and profound conspiracy, to be laid aside, as the First Consul had at one moment designed. One man alone, of those high in the State, appeared to distrust Olivier Dalibard—the celebrated

Cambacères. But with his aid the Provençal could dispense. What was the secret of Dalibard's power? was it, in truth, owing solely to his native talent, and his acquired experience, especially of England?—was it by honourable means that he had won the ear of the First Consul? We may be sure of the contrary; for it is a striking attribute of men once thoroughly tainted by the indulgence of vicious schemes and stratagems, that they become wholly blinded to those plain paths of ambition, which common sense makes manifest to ordinary ability. If we regard narrowly the lives of great criminals, we are often very much startled by the extraordinary acuteness—the profound calculation—the patient meditative energy which they have employed upon the conception and execution of a crime. We feel inclined to think that such intellectual power would have commanded great distinction, worthily used and guided; but we never find that these great criminals seem to have been sensible of the opportunities to real eminence which they have thrown away. Often we observe that there have been before them vistas into worldly greatness, which, by no uncommon prudence and exertion, would have conducted honest men, half as clever, to fame and power; but, with a strange obliquity of vision, they appear to have looked from these broad clear avenues, into some dark, tangled defile, in which, by the subtlest ingenuity, and through the most besetting perils, they might attain at last to the success of a fraud, or the enjoyment of a vice. In crime once indulged, there is a wonderful fascination—and the fascination is, not rarely, great in proportion to the intellect of the criminal. There is always hope of reform for a dull, uneducated, stolid man, led by accident or temptation into guilt; but

where a man of great ability, and highly educated, besots himself in the intoxication of dark and terrible excitements, takes impure delight in tortuous and slimy ways, the good angel abandons him for ever.

Olivier Dalibard walked musingly on—gained a house in one of the most desolate quarters of the abandoned Faubourg, mounted the spacious stairs, and rang at the door of an attic next the roof. After some moments, the door was slowly and cautiously opened, and two small fierce eyes, peering through a mass of black tangled curls, gleamed through the aperture. The gaze seemed satisfactory.

“Enter, friend,” said the inmate, with a sort of complacent grunt; and, as Dalibard obeyed, the man reclosed, and barred the door.

The room was bare to beggary,—the ceiling, low and sloping, was blackened with smoke. A wretched bed, two chairs, a table, a strong chest, a small cracked looking-glass, completed the inventory. The dress of the occupier was not in keeping with the chamber;—true that it was not such as was worn by the wealthier classes, but it betokened no sign of poverty. A blue coat, with high collar, and half of military fashion, was buttoned tight over a chest of vast girth; the nether garments were of leather, scrupulously clean, and solid, heavy riding boots came half way up the thigh. A more sturdy, stalwart, strong-built knave, never excited the admiration which physical power always has a right to command: And Dalibard gazed on him with envy. The pale scholar absolutely sighed as he thought—what an auxiliary to his own scheming mind would have been so tough a frame!

But even less in form than face did the man of thews and sinews contrast the man of wile and craft. Opposite that high forehead, with its massive

development of organs, scowled the low front of one to whom thought was unfamiliar—protuberant, indeed, over the shaggy brows, where phrenologists place the seats of practical perception—strongly marked in one of the brutes, as in the dog—but almost literally void of those higher organs, by which we reason, and imagine, and construct. But in rich atonement for such deficiency, all the animal reigned triumphant in the immense mass and width of the skull behind. And as the hair, long before, curled in close rings to the nape of the bull-like neck, you saw before you one of those useful instruments to ambition and fraud, which recoil at no danger, comprehend no crime, are not without certain good qualities, under virtuous guidance,—for they have the fidelity, the obedience, the stubborn courage of the animal; but which, under evil control, turn those very qualities to unsparing evil—bull-dogs to rend the foe, as bull-dogs to defend the master.

For some moments the two men gazed silently at each other. At length, Dalibard said, with an air of calm superiority—

“My friend, it is time that I should be presented to the chiefs of your party!”

“Chiefs, *par tous les diables!*” growled the other; “we *Chouans* are all chiefs, when it comes to blows. You have seen my credentials; you know that I am a man to be trusted; what more do you need?”

“For myself nothing; but my friends are more scrupulous. I have sounded, as I promised, the heads of the old Jacobin party—and they are favourable. This upstart soldier, who has suddenly seized in his iron grasp all the fruits of the Revolution, is as hateful to them as to you. But, *que voulez-vous, mon cher*—men are men! It is one thing to destroy Buonaparte; it is another thing to restore the

Bourbons. How can the Jacobin chiefs depend on your assurance, or my own, that the Bourbons will forget the old offences, and reward the new service? You apprise me, so do your credentials, that a Prince of the blood is engaged in this enterprise, that he will appear at the proper season. Put me in direct communication with this representative of the Bourbons, and I promise in return, if his assurances are satisfactory, that you shall have an *émeute* to be felt from Paris to Marseilles. If you cannot do this, I am useless; and I withdraw——”

“Withdraw! *Garde à vous—Monsieur le Savant!* No man withdraws alive from a conspiracy like ours.”

We have said before that Olivier Dalibard was not physically brave; and the look of the *Chouan*, as those words were said, would have frozen the blood of many a bolder man. But the habitual hypocrisy of Dalibard enabled him to disguise his fear, and he replied, drily:

“*Monsieur le Chouan*,—it is not by threats that you will gain adherents to a desperate cause, which, on the contrary, requires mild words and flattering inducements. If you commit a violence—a murder—*mon cher*—Paris is not Bretagne; we have a police; you will be discovered.”

“Ha, ha!—what then?—do you think I fear the guillotine?”

“For yourself—no; but for your leaders—yes! If you are discovered, and arrested for crime, do you fancy that the Police will not recognise the right arm of the terrible George Cadoudal?—that they will not guess that Cadoudal is at Paris?—that Cadoudal will not accompany you to the guillotine?”

The *Chouan's* face fell. Olivier watched him, and pursued his advantage.

“I asked you to introduce to me this shadow of a prince, under which

you would march to a counter-revolution. But I will be more easily contented. Present me to George Cadoudal, the hero of Morbihan; he is a man in whom I can trust, and with whom I can deal. What!—you hesitate?—How do you suppose enterprises of this nature can be carried on? If, from fear and distrust of each other, the man you would employ cannot meet the chief who directs him, there will be delay—confusion—panic,—and you will all perish by the executioner. And for me, Pierre Guillot, consider my position: I am in some favour with the First Consul—I have a station of respectability—a career lies before me. Can you think that I will hazard these, with my head to boot, like a rash child? Do you suppose that, in entering into this terrible contest, I would consent to treat only with subordinates? Do not deceive yourself. Again, I say, tell your employers that they must confer with me directly, or *je m'en lave les mains*.”

“I will repeat what you say,” answered Guillot, sullenly. “Is this all?”

“All for the present,” said Dalibard, slowly drawing on his gloves, and retreating towards the door. The *Chouan* watched him with a suspicious and sinister eye; and as the Provencal's hand was on the latch, he laid his own rough grasp on Dalibard's shoulder—

“I know not how it is, Monsieur Dalibard, but I mistrust you.”

“Distrust is natural and prudent to all who conspire,” replied the scholar, quietly. “I do not ask you to confide in me—your employers bade you seek me—I have mentioned my conditions—let them decide.”

“You carry it off well, Monsieur Dalibard. And I am under a solemn oath, which poor George made me take, knowing me to be a hot-headed, honest fellow—*mauvaise tête*, if you

will—that I will keep my hand off the pistol and knife upon mere suspicion—that nothing less than his word or than clear and positive proof of treachery shall put me out of good humour and into warm blood. But bear this with you, Monsieur Dalibard, if I once discover that you use our secrets to betray them,—should George see you, and one hair of his head come to injury through *your* hands, I will wring your neck as a housewife wrings a pullet's."

"I don't doubt your strength or your ferocity, Pierre Guillot; but my neck will be safe; you have enough to do to take care of your own—*au revoir*."

With a tone and look of calm and fearless irony, the scholar thus spoke and left the room; but when he was on the stairs, he paused, and caught at the balustrade—the sickness as of terror at some danger past, or to be, came over him; and this contrast between the self-command, or simulation which belongs to moral courage, and the feebleness of natural and constitutional cowardice, would have been sublime if shown in a noble cause. In one so corrupt, it but betrayed a nature doubly formidable; for treachery and murder hatch their brood amidst the folds of a hypocrite's cowardice.

While thus the interview between Dalibard and the conspirator,—we must bestow a glance upon the Provençal's home.

In an apartment in one of the principal streets, between the Boulevards and the Rue St. Honoré, a boy and a woman sat side by side, conversing in whispers. The boy was Gabriel Varney, the woman Lucretia Dalibard. The apartment was furnished in the then modern taste which affected classical forms; and though not without a certain elegance, had something meagre and comfortless in its splendid tripods and thin-

legged chairs. There was in the apartment that air which bespeaks the struggle for appearances—that struggle familiar with those of limited income, and vain aspirings, who want the taste which smoothes all inequalities, and gives a smile to home—that taste which affection seems to prompt, if not to create—which shows itself in a thousand nameless, costless trifles, each a grace. No sign was there of the household cares or industry of women. No flowers, no music, no embroidery-frame, no work-table. Lucretia had none of the sweet feminine habits which betray so lovelily the whereabouts of women. All was formal and precise, like rooms which we enter and leave—not those in which we settle and dwell.

Lucretia herself is changed, her air is more assured, her complexion more pale, the evil character of her mouth more firm and pronounced.

Gabriel, still a mere boy in years, has a premature look of man. The down shades his lips. His dress, though showy and theatrical, is no longer that of boyhood. His rounded cheek has grown thin, as with the care and thought which beset the anxious step of youth on entering into life.

Both, as before remarked, spoke in whispers;—both from time to time glanced fearfully at the door; both felt that they belonged to a hearth round which smile not the jocund graces of trust and love, and the heart's open ease.

"But," said Gabriel—"but if you would be safe, my father must have no secrets hid from you."

"I do not know that he has. He speaks to me frankly of his hopes—of the share he has in the discovery of the plot against the First Consul—of his interviews with Pierre Guillot, the Breton."

"Ah, because *there* your courage supports him, and your acuteness

assists his own. Such secrets belong to his public life—his political schemes—with those he will trust you. It is his private life—his private projects you must know.”

“But what does he conceal from me? Apart from politics, his whole mind seems bent on the very natural object of securing the intimacy with his rich cousin, Monsieur Bellanger, from whom he has a right to expect so large an inheritance.”

Bellanger is rich, but he is not much older than my father.”

“He has bad health.”

“No,” said Gabriel, with a downcast eye and a strange smile—“he has not bad health, but he may not be long lived.”

“How do you mean?” asked Lucretia, sinking her voice into a still lower whisper, while a shudder, she scarce knew why, passed over her frame.

“What does my father do,” resumed Gabriel, “in that room at the top of the house? Does he tell you *that* secret?”

“He makes experiments in chemistry. You know that that was always his favourite study. You smile again! Gabriel, do not smile so; it appals me. Do you think there is some mystery in that chamber?”

“It matters not what we think, *belle mère*—it matters much what we know. If I were you, I *would* know what is in that chamber. I repeat, to be safe, you must have all his secrets or none. Hush, that is his step!”

The door handle turned noiselessly, and Olivier entered. His look fell on his son's face, which betrayed only apparent surprise at his unexpected return. He then glanced at Lucretia's, which was, as usual, cold and impenetrable.

“Gabriel,” said Dalibard, gently, “I have come in for you. I have promised to take you to spend the

day at Monsieur Bellanger's; you are a great favourite with Madame. Come, my boy. I shall be back soon, Lucretia. I shall but drop in to leave Gabriel at my cousin's.”

Gabriel rose cheerfully, as if only alive to the expectation of the bon-bons and compliments he received habitually from Madame Bellanger.

“And you can take your drawing implements with you,” continued Dalibard. “This good Monsieur Bellanger has given you permission to copy his Poussin.”

“His Poussin! Ah, *that* is placed in his bed-room,* is it not?”

“Yes,” answered Dalibard, briefly.

Gabriel lifted his sharp bright eyes to his father's face. Dalibard turned away.

“Come!” he said, with some impatience; and the boy took up his hat.

In another minute, Lucretia was alone.

Alone, in an English home, is a word implying no dreary solitude to an accomplished woman; but alone in that foreign land—alone in those half-furnished, desolate apartments—few books, no musical instruments, no companions during the day to drop in;—*that* loneliness was wearing. And that mind so morbidly active! In the old Scottish legend, the Spirit that serves the wizard must be kept constantly employed; suspend its work for a moment, and it rends the enchanter. It is so with minds that crave for excitement, and live without relief of heart and affection, on the hard tasks of the intellect.

Lucretia mused over Gabriel's words and warning: “To be safe, you must know all his secrets or none.” What

* It is scarcely necessary to observe that bed chambers in Paris, when forming part of the suite of reception rooms, are often decorated no less elaborately than the other apartments.

was the secret which Dalibard had not communicated to her?

She rose, stole up the cold, cheerless stairs, and ascended to the attic which Dalibard had lately hired. It was locked; and she observed that the lock was small—so small, that the key might be worn in a ring. She descended and entered her husband's usual cabinet, which adjoined the sitting-room. All the books which the house contained were there; a few works on metaphysics—Spinoza in especial—the great Italian histories, some volumes of statistics, many on physical and mechanical philosophy, and one or two works of biography and memoirs:—No light literature, that grace and flower of human culture—that best philosophy of all, humanising us with gentle art, making us wise through the humours, elevated through the passions, tender in the affections of our kind! She took out one of the volumes that seemed less arid than the rest, for she was weary of her own thoughts, and began to read. To her surprise, the first passage she opened was singularly interesting, though the title was nothing more seductive than the “Life of a Physician of Padua, in the Sixteenth Century.” It related to that singular epoch of terror in Italy, when some mysterious disease, varying in a thousand symptoms, baffled all remedy, and long defied all conjecture—a disease attacking chiefly the heads of families, father and husband—rarely women. In one city, seven hundred husbands perished, but not one wife! The disease was poison. The hero of the memoir was one of the earlier discoverers of the true cause of this household epidemic. He had been a chief authority in a commission of inquiry. Startling were the details given in the work; the anecdotes, the histories, the astonishing craft brought daily to bear on the victim, the wondrous perfidy

of the subtle means, the variation of the certain murder—here swift as epilepsy—there slow and wasting as long decline:—the lecture was absorbing; and absorbed in the book Lucretia still was, when she heard Dalibard's voice behind; he was looking over her shoulder.

“A strange selection for so fair a student! *Enfant*, play not with such weapons!”

“But is this all true?”

“True, though scarce a fragment of the truth. The physician was a sorry chemist, and a worse philosopher. He blundered in his analysis of the means; and, if I remember rightly, he whines like a priest at the motives; for see you not what was really the cause of this spreading pestilence. It was the Saturnalia of the Weak—a burst of mocking licence against the Strong: it was more—it was the innate force of the individual waging war against the many.”

“I do not understand you.”

“No! In that age, husbands were, indeed, lords of the household: they married mere children for their lands; they neglected and betrayed them; they were inexorable if the wife committed the faults set before her example. Suddenly the wife found herself armed against her tyrant. His life was in her hands. So the weak had no mercy on the strong! But man, too, was then, even more than now, a lonely wrestler in a crowded arena. Brute force alone gave him distinction in courts; wealth alone brought him justice in the halls, or gave him safety in his home. Suddenly, the frail, puny man saw that he could reach the mortal part of his giant foe. The noiseless sling was in his hand—it smote Goliath from afar. Suddenly, the poor man, ground to the dust, spat upon by contempt, saw through the crowd of richer kinsmen, who shunned and bade him rot—saw those whose death made him heir to lord-

ship, and gold, and palaces, and power, and esteem! As a worm through a wardrobe, that man ate through velvet and ermine, and gnawed out the hearts that beat in his way. No! A great intellect can comprehend these criminals, and account for the crime. It is a mighty thing to feel in one's self that one is an army—more than an army! What thousands and millions of men, with trumpet and banner, and under the sanction of glory, strive to do—*destroy a foe*, that, with little more than an effort of the will—with a drop, a grain, for all his arsenal—one man can do!”

There was a horrible enthusiasm about this reasoning devil as he spoke thus; his crest rose, his breast expanded. That animation which a noble thought gives to generous hearts, kindled in the face of the apologist for the darkest and basest of human crimes. Lucretia shuddered; but her gloomy imagination was spelled; there was an interest mingled with her terror.

“Hush! you appal me,” she said, at last, timidly. “But, happily, this fearful art exists no more to tempt and destroy?”

“As a mere philosophical discovery, it might be amusing to a chemist to learn exactly what were the compounds of those ancient poisons,” said Dalibard, not directly answering the implied question. “Portions of the art are indeed lost, unless, as I suspect, there is much credulous exaggeration in the accounts transmitted to us. To kill by a flower, a pair of gloves, a soap ball—kill by means which elude all possible suspicion—is it credible? What say you? An amusing research, indeed, if one had leisure! But enough of this now; it grows late. We dine with Monsieur de —. He wishes to let his hotel. Why, Lucretia, if we knew a little of this old art, *Par Dieu!* we could soon hire the hotel! Well, well,

perhaps we may survive my cousin, Jean Bellanger!”

Three days afterwards, Lucretia stood by her husband's side in the secret chamber. From the hour when she left it, a change was perceptible in her countenance, which gradually removed from it the character of youth. Paler the cheek could scarce become, nor more cold the discontented, restless eye. But it was as if some great care had settled on her brow, and contracted yet more the stern outline of the lips. Gabriel noted the alteration; but he did not attempt to win her confidence. He was occupied rather in considering, first, if it were well for him to sound deeper into the mystery he suspected; and, secondly, to what extent, and on what terms it became his interest to aid the designs in which, by Dalibard's hints and kindly treatment, he foresaw that he was meant to participate.

A word now on the rich kinsman of the Dalibards: Jean Bellanger had been one of those prudent republicans who had put the Revolution to profit. By birth a Marseillais,—he had settled in Paris, as an *épiciier*, about the year 1785, and had distinguished himself by the adaptability and finesse which become those who fish in such troubled waters. He had sided with Mirabeau, next with Vergniaud, and the Girondins. These he forsook in time for Danton, whose facile corruptibility made him a seductive patron. He was a large purchaser in the sale of the emigrant property; he obtained a contract for the supply of the army in the Netherlands; he abandoned Danton as he had abandoned the Girondins, but without taking any active part in the after proceedings of the Jacobins. His next connexion was with Tallien and Barras, and he enriched himself yet more under the Directory than he had done in the earlier stages of

the Revolution. Under cover of an appearance of *bonhomie* and good humour, a frank laugh and open countenance. Jean Bellanger had always retained general popularity and good will; and was one of those whom the policy of the First Consul led him to conciliate. He had long since retired from the more vulgar departments of trade, but continued to flourish as an army contractor. He had a large hotel and a splendid establishment. He was one of the great capitalists of Paris. The relationship between Dalibard and Bellanger was not very close, it was that of cousins twice removed; and during Dalibard's previous residence at Paris, each embracing different parties, and each eager in his career, the blood-tie between them had not been much thought of, though they were good friends, and each respected the other for the discretion with which he had kept aloof from the more sanguinary excesses of the time. As Bellanger was not many years older than Dalibard, as the former had but just married in the year 1791, and had naturally before him the prospect of a family—as his fortunes at that time, though rising, were unconfirmed, and as some nearer relations stood between them, in the shape of two promising sturdy nephews, Dalibard had not then calculated on any inheritance from his cousin. On his return, circumstances were widely altered—Bellanger had been married some years, and no issue had blessed his nuptials. His nephews, draughted into the conscription, had perished in Egypt. Dalibard apparently became his nearest relative.

To avarice or to worldly ambition, there was, undoubtedly, something very dazzling in the prospect thus opened to the eyes of Olivier Dalibard. The Contractor's splendid mode of living, vying with that of the *fermier-général* of old, the colossal masses of

capital, by which he backed and supported speculations, that varied with an ingenuity rendered practical and profound by experience, inflamed into fever the morbid restlessness of fancy and intellect which characterised the evil scholar. For that restlessness seemed to supply to his nature, vices not constitutional to it. Dalibard had not the avarice that belongs either to a miser or a spendthrift. In his youth, his books and the simple desires of an abstract student sufficed to his wants, and a habit of method and order, a mechanical calculation which accompanied all his acts, from the least to the greatest—preserved him, even when most poor, from neediness and want. Nor was he by nature vain and ostentatious—those infirmities accompany a larger and more luxuriant nature. His philosophy rather despised, than inclined to, show. Yet since to plot and to scheme made his sole amusement, his absorbing excitement,—so a man wrapped in himself, and with no generous ends in view, has little to plot or to scheme for, but objects of worldly aggrandisement. In this, Dalibard resembled one whom the intoxication of gambling has mastered, who neither wants, nor greatly prizes, the stake, but who has grown wedded to the venture for it. It was a madness like that of a certain rich nobleman in our own country, who, with more money than he could spend, and with a skill, in all games where skill enters, that would have secured him success of itself,—having learned the art of cheating, could not resist its indulgence. No hazard, no warning, could restrain him—cheat he must—the propensity became iron-strong as a Greek destiny.

That the possible chance of an inheritance so magnificent should dazzle Lucretia and Gabriel, was yet more natural; for in them, it appeared to more direct and eloquent, though

not more powerful, propensities. Gabriel had every vice which the greed of gain most irritates and excites. Intense covetousness lay at the core of his heart; he had the sensual temperament which yearns for every enjoyment, and takes pleasure in every pomp and show of life. Lucretia, with a hardness of mind that disdained luxury; and a certain grandeur, (if such a word may be applied to one so perverted,) that was incompatible with the sordid infirmities of the miser, had a determined and insatiable ambition to which gold was a necessary instrument. Wedded to one she loved, like Mainwaring, the ambition, as we have said in a former chapter, could have lived in another, and become devoted to intellectual efforts, in the nobler desire for power based on fame and genius. But now she had the gloomy cravings of one fallen, and the uneasy desire to restore herself to a lost position—she fed as an aliment upon scorn to bitterness, of all beings and all things around her. She was gnawed by that false fever which riots in those who seek by outward seemings and distinctions to console themselves for the want of their own self-esteem; or who, despising the world with which they are brought in contact, sigh for those worldly advantages, which alone justify to the world itself their contempt.

To these diseased infirmities of vanity or pride, whether exhibited in Gabriel or Lucretia, Dalibard administered without apparent effort, not only by his conversation, but his habits of life. He mixed with those much wealthier than himself, but not better born—those who, in the hot and fierce ferment of that new society, were rising fast into new aristocracy,—fortunate soldiers, daring speculators, plunderers of many an argosy that had been wrecked in the Great Storm. Every one about them was

actuated by the keen desire “to make a fortune”—the desire was contagious. They were not absolutely poor in the proper sense of the word poverty, with Dalibard’s annuity and the interest of Lucretia’s fortune, but they were poor compared to those with whom they associated—poor enough for discontent. Thus, the image of the mighty wealth from which, perhaps, but a single life divided them, became horribly haunting. To Gabriel’s sensual vision, the image presented itself in the shape of unlimited pleasure and prodigal riot; to Lucretia, it wore the solemn majesty of power: to Dalibard himself, it was but the Eureka of a calculation—the palpable reward of wile, and scheme, and dexterous combinations. The devil had temptations suited to each. Meanwhile, the Dalibards were more and more with the Bellangers. Olivier glided in to talk of the chances and changes of the state and the market. Lucretia sate for hours, listening mutely to the Contractor’s boasts of past frauds, or submitting to the martyrdom of his victorious games at tric-trac. Gabriel, a spoiled darling, copied the pictures on the walls, complimented Madame, flattered Monsieur, and fawned on both for trinkets and crowns. Like three birds of night and omen, these three evil natures settled on the rich man’s roof.

Was the rich man himself blind to the motives which badded forth into such attentive affection? His penetration was too acute—his ill opinion of mankind too strong, perhaps, for such amiable self-delusions. But he took all in good part, availed himself of Dalibard’s hints and suggestions as to the employment of his capital; was polite to Lucretia, and readily condemned her to be beaten at tric-trac, while he accepted with *bon-homie* Gabriel’s spirited copies of his pictures. But at times, there was

gleam of satire and malice in his round grey eyes, and an inward chuckle at the caresses and flatteries he received, which perplexed Dalibard, and humbled Lucretia. Had his wealth been wholly at his own disposal, these signs would have been inauspicious, but the new law was strict, and the bulk of Bellanger's property could not be alienated from his nearest kin. Was not Dalibard the nearest?

These hopes and speculations did not, as we have seen, absorb the restless and rank energies of Dalibard's crooked, but capacious and grasping intellect. Patiently and ingeniously he pursued his main political object—the detection of that audacious and complicated conspiracy against the First Consul, which ended in the tragic deaths of Pichegru, the Duc D'Enghien, and the erring but illustrious hero of La Vendée, George Cadoudal. In the midst of these dark plots for personal aggrandisement and political fortune, we leave, for the moment, the sombre sullen soul of Olivier Dalibard.

* * * * *

Time has passed on, and Spring is over the world; the seeds, buried in the earth, burst to flower; but man's breast knoweth not the sweet division of the seasons. In winter or summer, autumn or spring alike, his thoughts sow the germs of his actions, and day after day his destiny gathers in her harvests.

The joy-bells ring clear through the groves of Laughton—an heir is born to the old name and fair lands of St. John! And, as usual, the present race welcomes merrily in, that which shall succeed and replace it—that which shall thrust the enjoyers down into the black graves, and wrest from them the pleasant goods of the world. The joy-bell of birth is a note of

warning to the knell for the dead; it wakes the worms beneath the mould; the new-born, every year that it grows and flourishes, speeds the Parent to their feast. Yet who can predict that the infant shall become the heir?—who can tell that Death sits not side by side with the nurse at the cradle? Can the mother's hand measure out the woof of the Parcae, or the father's eye detect, through the darkness of the morrow, the gleam of the fatal shears?

It is market-day, at a town in the midland districts of England. There, Trade takes its healthiest and most animated form. You see not the stunted form and hollow eye of the mechanic—poor slave of the capitalist—poor agent and victim of the arch dis-equaliser—Civilisation. There, strides the burly form of the farmer: there, waits the ruddy hind with his flock; there, patient, sits the miller with his samples of corn; there, in the booths, gleam the humble wares which form the luxuries of cottage and farm. The thronging of men, and the clacking of whips, and the dull sound of wagon or dray, that parts the crowd as it passes, and the lowing of herds and the bleating of sheep, all are sounds of movement and bustle, yet blend with the pastoral associations of the Primitive Commerce, when the link between market and farm was visible and direct.

Towards one large house in the centre of the brisk life ebbing on, you might see stream after stream pour its way. The large doors swinging light on their hinges, the gilt letters that shine above the threshold, the windows, with their shutters outside cased in iron and studded with nails, announce that that house is the Bank of the town. Come in with that yeoman, whose broad face tells its tale, sheepish and down-eyed—he has come not to invest, but to

borrow. What matters, war is breaking out anew, to bring the time of high prices, and paper money and credit. Honest yeoman, you will not be refused. He scratches his rough head, pulls a leg, as he calls it, when the clerk leans over the counter, and asks to see "Muster Mawnering hisself." The clerk points to the little office-room of the new junior partner, who has brought ten thousand pounds, and a clear head, to the firm. And the yeoman's great boots creak heavily in. I told you so, honest yeoman: you come out with a smile on your brown face, and your hand, that might fell an ox, buttons up your huge breeches-pocket. You will ride home with a light heart—go and dine, and be merry.

The yeoman tramps to the Ordinary; plates clatter, tongues wag; and the borrower's full heart finds vent in a good word for that kind "Muster Mawnering." For a wonder, all join in the praise. "He's an honour to the town; he's a pride to the country—thof he's such a friend at a pinch, he's a rare mon of business! He'll make the baunk worth a million!—and how well he spoke at the great county meeting about the war, and the laund, and them blood-thirsty Mounseers! If their members were loike him, Muster Fox would look small!"

The day declines; the town empties—whiskies, horses, and carts, are giving life to the roads and the lanes—and the market is deserted, and the bank is shut up, and William Mainwaring walks back to his home at the skirts of the town—not villa nor cottage—that plain English house with its cheerful face of red brick, and its solid squareness of shape—a symbol of substance in the fortunes of the owner! Yet, as he passes, he sees through the distant trees the hall of the member for the town. He pauses a moment, and sighs unquietly. That pause and

that sigh betray the germ of ambition and discontent. Why should not he who can speak so well, be member for the town, instead of that stammering squire? But his reason has soon silenced the querulous murmur. He hastens his step—he is at home! And there, in the neat furnished drawing-room, which looks on the garden behind, hisses the welcoming tea-urn; and the piano is open, and there is a packet of new books on the table; and, best of all, there is the glad face of the sweet English wife. The happy scene was characteristic of the time, just when the simpler and more innocent luxuries of the higher class spread, not to spoil, but refine the middle. The dress, air, mien, movements of the young couple; the unassuming, suppressed, sober elegance of the house; the flower-garden, the books, and the music, evidences of cultivated taste, not signals of display,—all bespoke the gentle fusion of ranks, before rude and uneducated wealth, made in looms and lucky hits, rushed in to separate for ever the gentleman from the *parvenu*.

Spring smiles over Paris, over the spires of Nôtre Dame, and the crowded alleys of the Tuileries, over thousands and thousands eager, joyous, aspiring, reckless—the New Race of France—bound to one man's destiny, children of glory and of carnage, whose blood the wolf and the vulture scent, hungry, from afar!

The conspiracy against the life of the First Consul has been detected and defeated. Pichegru is in prison, George Cadoudal awaits his trial, the Duc D'Enghien sleeps in his bloody grave; the imperial crown is prepared for the great soldier, and the great soldier's creatures bask in the noon-day sun. Olivier Dalibard is in high and lucrative employment: his rise is ascribed to his talents—his opinions. No service connected

with the detection of the conspiracy is traced or traceable by the public eye. If such exist, it is known but to those who have no desire to reveal it. The old apartments are retained; but they are no longer dreary, and comfortless, and deserted. They are gay with draperies, and or-molu, and mirrors; and Madame Dalibard has her nights of reception, and Monsieur Dalibard has already his troops of clients. In that gigantic concentration of egotism which, under Napoleon, is called The State, Dalibard has found his place. He has served to swell the power of the unit, and the cypher gains importance by its position in the sum.

Jean Bellanger is no more. He died, not suddenly, and yet of some quick disease—nervous exhaustion. His schemes, they said, had worn him out. But the state of Dalibard, though prosperous, is not that of the heir to the dead millionaire. What mistake is this? The bulk of that wealth must go to the nearest kin—so runs the law. But the will is read; and, for the first time, Olivier Dalibard learns that the dead man had a son—a son by a former marriage—the marriage undeclared, unknown, amidst the riot of the revolution; for the wife was the daughter of a *proscrit*. The son had been reared at a distance, put to school at Lyons, and unavowed to the second wife, who had brought an ample dowry, and whom that discovery might have deterred from the altar. Unacknowledged through life—in death, at least, the son's rights are proclaimed: and Olivier Dalibard feels that Jean Bellanger has died in vain! For days has the pale Provençal been closeted with lawyers, but there is no hope in litigation. The proofs of the marriage, the birth, the identity, come out clear and clearer; and the beardless schoolboy at Lyons reaps all the profit of those nameless schemes and that mysterious death.

Olivier Dalibard desires the friendship—the intimacy of the heir. But the heir is consigned to the guardianship of a merchant at Lyons, near of kin to his mother—and the guardian responds but coldly to Olivier's letters. Suddenly the defeated aspirant seems reconciled to his loss. The widow Bellanger has her own separate fortune; and it is large, beyond expectation. In addition to the wealth she brought the deceased, his affection had led him to invest vast sums in her name. The widow, then, is rich—rich as the heir himself. She is still fair. Poor woman, she needs consolation! But, meanwhile, the nights of Olivier Dalibard are disturbed and broken. His eye, in the day-time, is haggard and anxious; he is seldom seen on foot in the streets. Fear is his companion by day, and sits at night on his pillow. The *Chouan*, Pierre Guillot, who looked to George Cadoudal as a god, knows that George Cadoudal has been betrayed, and suspects Olivier Dalibard; and the *Chouan* has an arm of iron and a heart steel'd against all mercy. Oh, how the pale scholar thirsted for that *Chouan's* blood! With what relentless pertinacity, with what ingenious research he had set all the hounds of the police upon the track of that single man! How notably he had failed! An avenger lived; and Olivier Dalibard started at his own shadow on the wall. But he did not the less continue to plot and to intrigue—nay, such occupation became more necessary, as an escape from himself.

And, in the meanwhile, Olivier Dalibard sought to take courage from the recollection that the *Chouan* had taken an oath (and he knew that oaths are held sacred with the Bretons) that he would keep his hand from his knife, unless he had clear evidence of treachery;—such evidence existed, but only in Dalibard's desk, or the archives of Fouché.

Tush, he was safe! And so, when from dreams of fear, he started at the depth of night, so his bolder wife would whisper to him with firm uncaressing lips. Olivier Dalibard, thou fearest the living, dost thou never fear the dead? Thy dreams are haunted with a spectre. Why takes it not the accusing shape of thy mouldering kinsman? Dalibard would have answered, for he was a philosopher in his cowardice, "*Il n'y a que les morts, qui ne reviennent pas.*"

It is the notable convenience of us narrators to represent, by what is called *soliloquy*, the thoughts—the interior of the personages we describe. And this is almost the master-work of the tale-teller—that is, if the soliloquy be really in words, what self-commune is in the dim and tangled recesses of the human heart! But to this privilege we are rarely admitted in the case of Olivier Dalibard; for he rarely communed with himself; a sort of mental calculation, it is true, eternally went on within him, like the wheels of a destiny; but it had become a mechanical operation—seldom disturbed by that *consciousness of thought*, with its struggles of fear and doubt, conscience and crime, which gives its appalling interest to the soliloquy of tragedy. Amidst the tremendous secrecy of that profound intellect, as at the bottom of a sea, only monstrous images of terror, things of prey, stirred in cold-blooded and devouring life; but into these deeps Olivier himself did not dive. He did not face his own soul: his outer life and his inner life seemed separate individualities, just as, in some complicated State, the social machine goes on through all its numberless cycles of vice and dread, whatever the acts of the government, which is the representative of the state, and stands for the state in the shallow judgment of history.

Before this time Olivier Dalibard's

manner to his son had greatly changed from the indifference it betrayed in England: it was kind and affectionate, almost caressing; while on the other hand, Gabriel, as if in possession of some secret which gave him power over his father, took a more careless and independent tone, often absented himself from the house for days together, joined the revels of young profligates older than himself, with whom he had formed acquaintance, indulged in spendthrift expenses, and plunged prematurely into the stream of vicious pleasure that oozed through the mud of Paris.

One morning, Dalibard, returning from a visit to Madame Bellanger, found Gabriel alone in the *salon*, contemplating his fair face and gay dress in one of the mirrors, and smoothing down the hair, which he wore long and sleek, as in the portraits of Raffaele. Dalibard's lip curled at the boy's coxcombry, though such tastes he himself had fostered, according to his ruling principles, that to govern, you must find a foible, or instil it; but the sneer changed into a smile.

"Are you satisfied with yourself, *joli garçon*?" he said, with saturnine playfulness.

"At least, sir, I hope that you will not be ashamed of me, when you formally legitimatise me as your son. The time has come, you know, to keep your promise."

"And it shall be kept, do not fear. But first, I have an employment for you—a mission—your first embassy, Gabriel."

"I listen, sir."

"I have to send to England a communication of the utmost importance—public importance—to the secret agent of the French government. We are on the eve of a descent on England. We are in correspondence with some in London on whom we count for support. A man might be sus-

pected, and searched—mind, *searched*. You, a boy, with English name and speech, will be my safest envoy. Buonaparte approves my selection. On your return, he permits me to present you to him. He loves the rising generation. In a few days, you will be prepared to start."

Despite the calm tone of the father, so had the son, from the instinct of fear and self-preservation, studied every accent, every glance of Olivier—so had he constituted himself a spy upon the heart whose perfidy was ever armed, that he detected at once in the proposal some scheme hostile to his interests. He made, however, no opposition to the plan suggested; and, seemingly satisfied with his obedience, the father dismissed him.

As soon as he was in the streets, Gabriel went straight to the house of Madame Bellanger. The hotel had been purchased in her name, and she therefore retained it. Since her husband's death, he had avoided that house, before so familiar to him; and now he grew pale, and breathed hard, as he passed by the porter's lodge up the lofty stairs.

He knew of his father's recent and constant visits at the house; and, without conjecturing precisely what were Olivier's designs, he connected them, in the natural and acquired shrewdness he possessed, with the wealthy widow. He resolved to watch, observe, and draw his own conclusions. As he entered Madame Bellanger's room rather abruptly, he observed her push aside amongst her papers something she had been gazing on—something which sparkled to his eyes. He sat himself down close to her with the caressing manner he usually adopted towards women; and in the midst of the babbling talk with which ladies generally honour boys, he suddenly, as if by accident, displaced the papers, and saw his father's miniature set in brilliants. The start of the

widow, her blush, and her exclamation, strengthened the light that flashed upon his mind. "O-ho, I see now," he said, laughing, "why my father is always praising black hair—and—nay, nay—gentlemen may admire ladies in Paris, surely!"

"Pooh, my dear child, your father is an old friend of my poor husband's, and a near relation too! But Gabriel, *mon petit ange!* you had better not say at home that you have seen this picture,—Madame Dalibard might be foolish enough to be angry."

"To be sure not. I have kept a secret before now!" and again the boy's cheek grew pale, and he looked hurriedly round.

"And you are very fond of Madame Dalibard, too, so you must not vex her."

"Who says I'm fond of Madame Dalibard?—a stepmother!"

"Why, your father, of course—*il est si bon—ce pauvre Dalibard*; and all men like cheerful faces, but then, poor lady—an English woman so strange here—very natural she should fret, and with bad health, too."

"Bad health, ah! I remember!—*she* also does not seem likely to live long!"

"So your poor father apprehends. Well, well, how uncertain life is! Who would have thought dear Bellanger would have——"

Gabriel rose hastily, and interrupted the widow's pathetic reflections. "I only ran in to say, *Bon jour*. I must leave you now."

"Adieu, my dear boy—not a word on the miniature! By-the-by, here's a shirt-pin for you—*tu es joli comme un amour*."

All was now clear to Gabriel—it was necessary to get rid of him, and for ever! Dalibard might dread his attachment to Lucretia—he would dread still more his closer intimacy with the widow of Bellanger, should that widow wed again—and Dalibard,

reed like her (by what means?) be her choice! Into that abyss of wickedness, fathomless to the innocent, the young villainous eye plunged, and surveyed the ground; a terror seized on him—a terror of life and death. Would Dalibard spare even his own son, if that son had the power to injure? This mission—was it exile only?—only a fall back to the old squalor of his uncle's studio?—only the laying aside of a useless tool—or was it a snare to the grave? Demon, as Dalibard was, doubtless the boy wronged him. But guilt construes guilt for the worst.

Gabriel had formerly enjoyed the thought to match himself, should danger come, with Dalibard; the hour *had* come, and he felt his impotence. Brave his father, and refuse to leave France! from that even his reckless hardihood shrank as from inevitable destruction. But to depart—be the poor victim and dupe; after having been let loose amongst the riot of pleasure, to return to labour and privation—from that option his vanity and his senses vindictively revolted. And Lucretia!—the only being who seemed to have a human kindness to him!—through all the vicious egotism of his nature, he had some grateful sentiments for her!—and even the egotism assisted that unwonted amiability, for he felt that, Lucretia gone, he had no hold on his father's house—that the home of her successor never would be his. While thus brooding, he lifted his eyes, and saw Dalibard pass in his carriage towards the Tuileries. The house, then, was clear—he could see Lucretia alone. He formed his resolution at once, and turned homewards. As he did so, he observed a man at the angle of the street, whose eyes followed Dalibard's carriage with an expression of unmistakeable hate and revenge; but scarcely had he marked the countenance, before the man, looking hur-

riedly round, darted away and was lost amongst the crowd.

Now, that countenance was not quite unfamiliar to Gabriel. He had seen it before, as he saw it now,—hastily, and, as it were, by fearful snatches. Once he had marked, on returning home at twilight, a figure lurking by the house—and something in the quickness with which it turned from his gaze, joined to his knowledge of Dalibard's apprehensions, made him mention the circumstance to his father, when he entered. Dalibard bade him hasten with a note, written hurriedly, to an agent of the police, whom he kept lodged near at hand. The man was still on the threshold, when the boy went out on this errand, and he caught a glimpse of his face; but before the police-agent reached the spot, the ill-omened apparition had vanished. Gabriel now, as his eye rested full upon that threatening brow, and those burning eyes, was convinced that he saw before him the terrible Pierre Guillot, whose very name blanched his father's cheek. When the figure retreated, he resolved at once to pursue. He hurried through the crowd amidst which the man had disappeared, and looked eagerly into the faces of those he jostled—sometimes, at the distance, he caught sight of a figure, which appeared to resemble the one which he pursued, but the likeness faded on approach. The chase, however, vague and desultory as it was, led him on till his way was lost amongst labyrinths of narrow and unfamiliar streets. Heated and thirsty, he paused at last before a small *café*—entered to ask for a draught of lemonade—and behold, chance had favoured him!—the man he sought was seated there, before a bottle of wine, and intently reading the newspaper. Gabriel sat himself down at the adjoining table. In a few moments the man was joined by a new comer—the two conversed,

but in whispers so low, that Gabriel was unable to hear their conversation—though he caught more than once the name of “George.” Both the men were violently excited, and the expression of their countenances was menacing and sinister. The first-comer pointed often to the newspaper, and read passages from it to his companion. This suggested to Gabriel the demand for another journal. When the waiter brought it to him, his eye rested upon a long paragraph, in which the name of George Cadoudal frequently occurred. In fact, all the journals of the day were filled with speculations on the conspiracy and trial of that fiery martyr to an erring adaptation of a noble principle. Gabriel knew that his father had had a principal share in the detection of the defeated enterprise; and his previous persuasions were confirmed.

His sense of hearing grew sharper by continued effort, and at length he heard the first-comer say distinctly—“If I were but sure that I had brought this fate upon George, by introducing to him that accursed Dalibard—if my oath did but justify me, I would——;” the concluding sentence was lost. A few moments after, the two men rose, and from the familiar words that passed between them and the master of the *café*, who approached, himself, to receive the reckoning, the shrewd boy perceived that the place was no unaccustomed haunt. He crept nearer and nearer; and as the landlord shook hands with his customer, he heard distinctly the former address him by the name of “Guillot.” When the men withdrew, Gabriel followed them at a distance, (taking care first to impress on his memory the name of the *café*, and the street in which it was placed) and, as he thought, unobserved; he was mistaken. Suddenly, in one street, more solitary

than the rest, the man whom he was mainly bent on tracking, turned round—advanced to Gabriel, who was on the other side of the street, and laid his hand upon him so abruptly, that the boy was fairly taken by surprise.

“Who bade you follow us?” said he, with so dark and fell an expression of countenance, that even Gabriel’s courage failed him: “no evasion—no lies—speak out, and at once;” and the grasp tightened on the boy’s throat.

Gabriel’s readiness of resource and presence of mind did not long forsake him.

“Loose your hold, and I will tell you—you stifle me.” The man slightly relaxed his grasp, and Gabriel said, quickly—“My mother perished on the guillotine in the Reign of Terror; I am for the Bourbons. I thought I overheard words which showed sympathy for poor George, the brave *Chouan*. I followed you; for I thought I was following friends.”

The man smiled as he fixed his steady eye upon the unflinching child: “My poor lad,” he said, gently, “I believe you—pardon me—but follow us no more—we are dangerous.” He waved his hand, and strode away, rejoined his companion, and Gabriel reluctantly abandoned the pursuit, and went homeward. It was long before he reached his father’s house, for he had strayed into a strange quarter of Paris, and had frequently to inquire the way. At length, he reached home, and ascended the stairs to a small room, in which Lucretia usually sate, and which was divided by a narrow corridor from the sleeping chamber of herself and Dalibard. His stepmother, leaning her cheek upon her hand, was seated by the window, so absorbed in some gloomy thoughts, which cast over her rigid face a shade, intense and solemn as despair, that she did not

perceive the approach of the boy till he threw his arm round her neck, and then she started as in alarm—

"You! only *you*," she said, with a constrained smile; "see, my nerves are not so strong as they were!"

"You are disturbed, *belle mère*—has he been vexing you?"

"He—Dalibard—no, indeed, we were only, this morning, discussing matters of business."

"Business!—that means money!"

"Truly," said Lucretia, "money does make the staple of life's business. In spite of his new appointment, your father needs some sums in hand—favours are to be bought—opportunities for speculation occur, and——"

"And my father," interrupted Gabriel, "wishes your consent to raise the rest of your portion."

Lucretia looked surprised, but answered quietly: "He had my consent long since, but the trustees to the marriage settlement—mere men of business—my uncle's bankers, for I had lost all claim on my kindred—refuse, or at least interpose such difficulties as amount to refusal."

"But that reply came some days since," said Gabriel, musingly.

"How did you know—did your father tell you?"

"Poor *belle mère*!" said Gabriel, almost with pity, "can you live in this house, and not watch all that passes—every stranger, every message, every letter?—But what, then, does he wish with you?"

"He has suggested my returning to England, and seeing the trustees myself. His interest can obtain my passport."

"And you have refused?"

"I have not consented."

"Consent!—hush!—your maid—Marie is not waiting without," and Gabriel rose and looked forth; "no, confound these doors! none close as they ought in this house. Is it

not a clause in your settlement that the half of your fortune now invested goes to the survivor?"

"It is," replied Lucretia, struck and thrilled at the question. "How, again, did you know this?"

"I saw my father reading the copy. If you die first, then, he has all! If he merely wanted the money he would not send you away!"

There was a terrible pause. Gabriel resumed: "I trust you, it may be, with my life; but I will speak out. My father goes much to Bel-langer's widow—she is rich and weak. Come to England! Yes, *come*—for he is about to dismiss *me*. He fears that I shall be in the way, to warn you, perhaps, or to—to—in short, *both* of us are in his way. He gives you an escape. Once in England, the war which is breaking out will prevent your return. He will twist the laws of divorce to his favour—he will marry again! What then?—he spares you what remains of your fortune—he spares your life. Remain here—cross his schemes—and—no, no;—come to England—safer anywhere than here!"

As he spoke, great changes had passed over Lucretia's countenance. At first it was the flash of conviction, then the stunned shock of horror; now she rose—rose to her full height—and there was a livid and deadly light in her eyes—the light of conscious courage, and power, and revenge. "Fool," she muttered, "with all his craft! Fool, fool! As if, in the war of household perfidy, the woman did not always conquer! Man's only chance is to be mailed in honour!"

"But," said Gabriel, overhearing her, "but you do not remember what it is. There is nothing you can see, and guard against. It is not like an enemy face to face; it is death in the food, in the air, in the touch. You stretch out your arms in the dark—

you feel nothing, and you die! Oh, do not fancy that I have not thought well (for I am almost a man now) if there were no means to resist—there are none! As well make head against the plague—it is in the atmosphere. Come to England, and return. Live poorly, if you must—but live!—but live!”

“Return to England poor and despised, and bound still to him, or a disgraced and divorced wife—disgraced by the low-born dependent on my kinsman’s house—and fawn perhaps upon my sister and her husband for bread! Never!—I am at my post, and I will not fly!”

“Brave! brave!” said the boy, clapping his hands, and sincerely moved by a daring superior to his own—“I wish I could help you!”

Lucretia’s eye rested on him with the full gaze, so rare in its looks. She drew him to her, and kissed his brow—“Boy, through life, whatever our guilt and its doom, we are bound to each other. I may yet live to have wealth—if so, it is yours as a son. I may be iron to others—never to you. Enough of this—I must reflect!” She passed her hands over her eyes a moment, and resumed—“You would help me in my self-defence; I think you can. You have been more alert in your watch than I have. You must have means I have not secured. Your father guards well all his papers!”

“I have keys to every desk. My foot passed the threshold of that room under the roof, before yours. But, no; his powers can never be yours! He has never confided to you half his secrets! He has antidotes for every—every——”

“Hist! what noise is that? Only the shower on the casements! No, no, child, that is not my object. Cadoudal’s conspiracy! Your father has letters from Fouché, which show how he has betrayed others who are

stronger to avenge than a woman and a boy.”

“Well!”

“I would have those letters! Give me the keys! But hold!—Gabriel—Gabriel, you may yet misjudge him. This woman—wife to the dead man—*his* wife! Horror! Have you no proofs of what you imply?”

“Proofs!” echoed Gabriel, in a tone of wonder, “I can but see and conjecture. You are warned, watch and decide for yourself. But again I say, come to England; I shall go!”

Without reply, Lucretia took the keys from Gabriel’s half-reluctant hand, and passed into her husband’s writing room. When she had entered, she locked the door. She passed at once to a huge secretary, of which the key was small as a fairy’s work. She opened it with ease by one of the counterfeits. No love correspondence—the first object of her search, for she was woman—met her eye. What need of letters, when interviews were so facile! But she soon found a document that told all which love-letters could tell—it was an account of the monies and possessions of Madame Bellanger—and there were pencil notes on the margin:—“Vautran will give 400 000 francs for the lands in Anvergne—to be accepted. Consult on the power of sale granted to a second husband. Query, if there is no chance of the heir-at-law disputing the monies invested in Madame B.’s name,”—and such memoranda as a man notes down in the schedule of properties about to be his own. In these inscriptions there was a hideous mockery of all love—like the blue lights of corruption, they showed the black vault of the heart. The pale reader saw what her own attractions had been, and, fallen as she was, she smiled superior in her bitterness of scorn. Arranged methodically with the precision of business, she found the

letters she next looked for; one recognising Dalibard's services in the detection of the conspiracy, and authorising him to employ the police in the search of Pierre Guillot, sufficed for her purpose. She withdrew, and secreted it. She was about to lock up the secretary, when her eye fell on the title of a small MS. volume in a corner; and as she read, she pressed one hand convulsively to her heart, while, twice with the other, she grasped the volume, and twice withdrew the grasp. The title ran harmlessly thus:—*Philosophical and chemical inquiries into the nature and materials of the poisons in use between the 14th and 16th centuries.*" Hurriedly, and at last, as if doubtful of herself, she left the MS., closed the secretary, and returned to Gabriel.

"You have got the paper you seek?" he said.

"Yes."

"Then whatever you do, you must be quick—he will soon discover the loss."

"I will be quick."

"It is I whom he will suspect," said Gabriel, in alarm, as that thought struck him. "No, for my sake, do not take the letter till I am gone. Do not fear, in the meantime—he will do nothing against you, while I am here."

"I will replace the letter till then," said Lucretia, meekly. "You have a right to my first thoughts." So she went back, and Gabriel, (suspicious, perhaps,) crept after her.

As she replaced the document, he pointed to the MS. which had tempted her—"I have seen that before, how I longed for it! If anything ever happens to him, I claim *that* as my legacy."

Their hands met as he said this, and grasped each other convulsively; Lucretia relocked the secretary, and when she gained the next room, she tottered to a chair. Her strong nerves

gave way for the moment; she uttered no cry, but, by the whiteness of her face, Gabriel saw that she was senseless; senseless for a minute or so—scarcely more. But the return to consciousness with a clenched hand, and a brow of defiance, and a stare of mingled desperation and dismay, seemed rather the awaking from some frightful dream of violence and struggle than the slow languid recovery from the faintness of a swoon. Yes, henceforth, to sleep, was to couch by a serpent—to breathe was to listen for the avalanche! Thou who didst trifle so wantonly with Treason, now gravely front the grim comrade thou hast won; thou scheming desecrator of the Household Gods, now learn, to the last page of dark knowledge, what the hearth is without them!

Gabriel was strangely moved as he beheld that proud and solitary despair. An instinct of nature had hitherto checked him from actively aiding Lucretia in that struggle with his father, which could but end in the destruction of one or the other. He had contented himself with forewarnings, with hints, with indirect suggestions; but now, all his sympathy was so strongly roused on her behalf, that the last faint scruple of filial conscience vanished into the abyss of blood, over which stood that lonely Titaness. He drew near, and, clasping her hand, said, in a quick and broken voice—

"Listen! You know where to find proof of my fa—that is, of—Dalibard's treason to the conspirators; you know the name of the man he dreads as an avenger, and you know that he waits but the proof to strike; but you do not know where to find that man, if his revenge is wanting for yourself. The police has not hunted him out; how can you? Accident has made me acquainted with one of his haunts. Give me a single promise, and I will put you at least upon that clue—weak, perhaps

but as yet the sole one to be followed. Promise me that, only in defence of your own life, not for mere jealousy, you will avail yourself of the knowledge, and you shall know all I do!"

"Do you think," said Lucretia, in a calm, cold voice, "that it is for jealousy, which is love, that I would murder all hope, all peace? for we have here—(and she smote her breast)—here, if not elsewhere, a heaven and a hell! Son, I will not harm your father, except in self-defence! But tell me nothing that may make the son a party in the father's doom."

"The father slew the mother," muttered Gabriel, between his clenched teeth; "and to me, you have well nigh supplied her place. Strike, if need be, in her name! If you are driven to want the arm of Pierre Guillot, seek news of him at the *Café Dufour, Rue S—, Boulevard du Temple*. Be calm now, I hear your husband's step."

A few days more, and Gabriel is gone! Wife and husband are alone with each other. Lucretia has refused to depart. Then that mute coma of horror! that suspense of two foes in the conflict of death—for the subtle prying eye of Olivier Dalibard sees that he himself is suspected—farther he shuns from sifting! Glance fastens on glance, and then hurries snilingly away. From the cup, grins a skeleton—at the board, warns a spectre. But how kind still the words, and how gentle the tone; and they lie down side by side in the marriage bed—brain plotting against brain, heart loathing heart. It is a duel of life and death, between those sworn through life and beyond death at the altar. But it is carried on with all the forms and courtesies of duel in the age of chivalry. No conjugal wrangling—no slip of the tongue;—the oil is on the surface of the wave—the monsters in the hell of the abyss war invisibly below. At length, a

dull torpor creeps over the woman—she feels the taint in her veins,—the slow victory is begun. What mattered all her vigilance and caution? Vainly glide from the pangs of the serpent, his very breath suffices to destroy! Pure seems the draught and wholesome the viand—that master of the science of murder needs not the means of the bungler! Then, keen and strong from the creeping lethargy started the fierce instinct of self and the ruthless impulse of revenge. Not too late yet to escape; for those subtle banes, that are to defy all detection, work but slowly to their end.

One evening, a woman, closely mantled, stood at watch by the angle of a wall. The light came dim and muffled from the window of a *café* hard at hand—the reflection slept amidst the shadows on the dark pavement, and, save a solitary lamp, swung at distance in the vista over the centre of the narrow street, no ray broke the gloom. The night was clouded and starless, the wind moaned in gusts, and the rain fell heavily; but the gloom and the loneliness did not appal the eye, and the wind did not chill the heart, and the rain fell unheeded on the head, of the woman at her post. At times, she paused in her slow, sentry-like pace to and fro, to look through the window of the *café*, and her gaze fell always on one figure seated apart from the rest. At length, her pulse beat more quickly, and the patient lips smiled sternly. The figure had risen to depart. A man came out, and walked quickly up the street, the woman approached, and when the man was under the single lamp swung aloft, he felt his arm touched; the woman was at his side, and looking steadily into his face—

"You are Pierre Guillot, the Breton, the friend of George Cadoudal. Will you be his avenger?"

The *Chouan's* first impulse had been to place his hand in his vest, and something shone bright in the lamp-light, clasped in those iron fingers. The voice and the manner reassured him, and he answered readily—

"I am he whom you seek, and I only live to avenge."

"Read, then, and act," answered the woman, and she placed a paper in his hands.

* * * * *

At Laughton the babe is on the breast of the fair mother; and the father sits beside the bed; and mother and father dispute almost angrily whether mother or father, those soft rounded features of slumbering infancy resemble most. At the red house, near the market town, there is a hospitable bustle. William is home, earlier than usual. Within the last hour, Susan has been thrice into every room. Husband and wife are now watching at the window. The good Fieldens, with a coach full of children, are expected, every moment, on a week's visit, at least.

In the *café*, in the *Boulevard du Temple*, sit Pierre Guillot, the *Chouan*, and another of the old band of *brigands*, whom George Cadoudal had mustered in Paris. There is an expression of content on Guillot's countenance—it seems more open than usual, and there is a complacent smile on his lips. He is whispering low to his friend, in the intervals of eating, an employment pursued with the hearty gusto of a hungry man. But his friend does not seem to sympathise with the cheerful feelings of his comrade; he is pale, and there is terror on his face; and you may see that the journal in his hand trembles like a leaf.

In the gardens of the *Tuileries*,

some score or so of gossips group together.

"And no news of the murderer?" asked one.

"No; but a man who had been friend to Robespierre must have made secret enemies enough."

"*Ce pauvre Dalibard!* He was not mixed up with the *Terrorists*, nevertheless."

"Ah, but the more deadly for that, perhaps—a sly man was Olivier Dalibard!"

"What's the matter?" said an *employé*, lounging up to the group. "Are you talking of Olivier Dalibard?"

It is but the other day he had Marsau's appointment. He is now to have Pleyel's. I heard it two days ago—a capital thing! *Peste, il ira loin!* We shall see him a senator soon."

"Speak for yourself," quoth a *ci-devant Abbé*, with a laugh. "I should be sorry to see him again, soon, wherever he be."

"*Plait-il!*—I don't understand you!"

"Don't you know that Olivier Dalibard is murdered—found stabbed—in his own house, too!"

"*Ciel!* Pray tell me all you know. His place, then, is vacant!"

"Why, it seems that Dalibard, who had been brought up to medicine, was still fond of chemical experiments. He hired a room at the top of the house for such scientific amusements. He was accustomed to spend part of his nights there. They found him at morning, bathed in his blood, with three ghastly wounds in his side, and his fingers cut to the bone. He had struggled hard with the knife that butchered him."

"In his own house!" said a lawyer: "some servant or spendthrift heir!"

"He has no heir but young Belanger, who will be *riche à millions*, and is now but a schoolboy at Lyons. No: it seems that the window was

left open, and that it communicates with the roof-tops. There the murderer had entered, and by that way escaped, for they found the leads of the gutter dabbled with blood. The next house was uninhabited—easy enough to get in there, and lie *perdu* till night.”

“Hum,” said the lawyer; “but the assassin could only have learned Dalibard’s habits from some one in the house. Was the deceased married?”

“Oh, yes; to an Englishwoman.”

“She had lovers, perhaps?”

“Pooh! lovers!—the happiest couple ever known! You should have seen them together. I dined there last week.”

“It is strange!” said the lawyer.

“And he was getting on so well,” muttered a hungry-looking man.

“And his place is vacant!” repeated the *employé*, as he quitted the crowd, abstractedly.

In the house of Olivier Dalibard sits Lucretia, alone, and in her own usual morning room. The officer appointed to such tasks by the French law, has performed his visit, and made his notes, and expressed condolence with the widow, and promised justice and retribution, and placed his seal on the locks till the representatives of the heir-at-law shall arrive; and the heir-at-law is the very boy who had succeeded so unexpectedly to the wealth of Jean Bellanger, the contractor! But Lucretia has obtained beforehand all she wishes to save from the rest. An open box is on the floor, into which her hand drops noiselessly a volume in manuscript. On the forefinger of that hand is a ring, larger and more massive than those usually worn by women;—by Lucretia never worn before. Why should that ring have been selected with such care from the dead man’s hoards? Why so precious the dull opal in that cumbrous setting? From

the hand the volume drops without sound into the box, as those whom the secrets of the volume instruct you to destroy, may drop without noise into the grave. The trace of some illness, recent and deep, nor conquered yet, has ploughed lines in that young countenance, and dimmed the light of those searching eyes. Yet, courage! the poison is arrested—the poisoner is no more—minds like thine, stern woman, are eased in coffers of steel, and the rust as yet has gnawed no deeper than the surface. So, over that face stamped with bodily suffering, plays a calm smile of triumph. The schemer has baffled the schemer! Turn now to the right, pass by that narrow corridor, you are in the marriage chamber—the windows are closed. Tall tapers burn at the foot of the bed. Now go back to that narrow corridor; disregarded, thrown aside, are a cloth and a besom; the cloth is wet still; but here, and there, the red stains are dry, and clotted as with bloody glue; and the hairs of the besom start up, torn and ragged, as if the bristles had a sense of some horror—as if things inanimate still partook of men’s dread at men’s deeds. If you passed through the corridor, and saw in the shadow of the wall that homeliest of instruments cast away and forgotten, you would smile at the slatternly housework. But if you knew that a corpse had been borne down those stairs to the left—borne along those floors to that marriage bed, with the blood oozing, and gushing, and plashing below, as the bearers passed with their burthen, then, straight that dead thing would take the awe of the dead being; it told its own tale of violence and murder; it had dabbled in the gore of the violated clay; it had become an evidence of the crime. No wonder that its hairs bristled up, sharp and ragged, in the shadow of the wall!

The first part of the tragedy ends. | less than sand-grain, and drop in
Let fall the curtain When next it | man's planet one Death and one
rises, years will have passed away, | Crime! On the map, trace all oceans,
graves uncounted will have wrought | and search out every shore,—more
fresh hollows in our merry sepulchre | than seas, more than lands, in God's
—sweet earth! Take a sand from | balance shall weigh one Death and
the shore, take a drop from the ocean, | one Crime!

END OF PART I.

PART THE SECOND



PART THE SECOND

PROLOGUE TO PART THE SECOND.

THE century has advanced : The rush of the deluge has ebbcd back, the old landmarks have reappeared ; the dynasties Napoleon willed into life have crumbled to the dust ; the plough has passed over Waterloo ; autumn after autumn the harvests have glittered on that grave of an empire. Through the immense ocean of universal change, we look back on the single track which our frail boat has cut through the waste. As a star shines impartially over the measureless expanse, though it seems to gild but *one* broken line to each eye ; so, as our memory gazes on the past, the light spreads not over all the breadth of the waste, where nations have battled, and argosies gone down—it falls narrow, and confined, along the single course we have taken : we lean over the small raft on which we float, and see the sparkles but reflected from the waves that it divides

On the terrace at Laughton, but *one* step paces slowly. The bride clings not now to the bridegroom's arm. Though pale and worn, it is still the same gentle face ; but the blush of woman's love has gone from it evermore.

Charles Vernon, (to call him still by the name in which he is best known to us,) sleeps in the vault of the St. Johns. He had lived longer than he himself had expected, than his physician had hoped—lived,

cheerful and happy, amidst quiet pursuits and innocent excitements. Three sons had blessed his hearth, to mourn over his grave. But the two elder were delicate and sickly. They did not long survive him, and died within a few months of each other. The third seemed formed of a different mould and constitution from his brethren. To him descended the ancient heritage of Laughton, and he promised to enjoy it long.

It is Vernon's widow who walks alone in the stately terrace ; sad still, for she loved well the choice of her youth, and she misses yet the children in the grave ; from the date of Vernon's death, she wore mourning without and within ; and the sorrows that came later, broke more the bruised reed ;—sad still, but resigned. One son survives ; and earth yet has the troubled hopes and the holy fears of affection. Though that son be afar, in sport or in earnest, in pleasure or in toil, working out his destiny as man, still that step is less solitary than it seems. When does the son's image not walk beside the mother ? Though she lives in seclusion, though the gay world tempts no more, the gay world is yet linked to her thoughts. From the distance she hears its murmurs in music. Her fancy still mingles with the crowd, and follows one, to her eye, outshining all the rest. Never

vain in herself, she is vain now of another; and the small triumphs of the young and well-born seem trophies of renown to the eyes so tenderly deceived.

In the old-fashioned market town still the business goes on, still the doors of the Bank open and close every moment on the great day of the week; but the names over the threshold are partially changed. The junior partner is busy no more at the desk; not wholly forgotten—if his name still is spoken, it is not with thankfulness and praise. A something rests on the name—that something which dims and attaints—not proven, not certain, but suspected and dubious. The head shakes, the voice whispers,—and the attorney now lives in the solid red house at the verge of the town.

In the vicarage, Time, the old scythe-bearer, has not paused from his work. Still employed on Greek texts, little changed, save that his hair is grey, and that some lines in his kindly face tell of sorrows as of years, the Vicar sits in his parlour, but the children no longer, blithe-voiced and rose-cheeked, dart through the rustling espaliers. Those children, grave men, or staid matrons (save one whom Death chose, and therefore now of all best beloved!) are at their posts in the world. The young ones are flown from the nest, and, with anxious wings, here and there, search food in their turn for their young. But the blithe voice and rose-cheek of the child make not that loss which the hearth misses the most. From childhood to manhood, and from manhood to departure, the natural changes are gradual and prepared. The absence most missed is that household life which presided, which kept things in order, and must be coaxed if a chair were displaced. That provi-

dence in trifles, that clasp of small links, that dear, bustling agency—now pleased, now complaining—dear alike in each change of its humour; that active life which has no self of its own;—like the mind of a poet, though its prose be the humblest, transferring self into others, with its right to be cross, and its charter to scold;—for the motive is clear—it takes what it loves too anxiously to heart. The door of the parlour is open, the garden path still passes before the threshold; but no step now has full right to halt at the door, and interrupt the grave thought on Greek texts;—no small talk on details and wise savings chimes in with the wrath of *Medea*. The Prudent Genius is gone from the household; and perhaps as the good scholar now wearily pauses, and looks out on the silent garden, he would have given with joy all that Athens produced, from *Æschylus* to Plato, to hear again from the old familiar lips the lament on torn jackets, or the statistical economy of eggs!

But see, though the wife is no more, though the children have departed, the Vicar's home is not utterly desolate. See, along the same walk on which William soothed Susan's fears, and won her consent—see, what fairy advances? Is it Susan returned to youth? How like! yet, look again, and how unlike! The same, the pure, candid regard—the same, the clear, limpid blue of the eye—the same, that fair hue of the hair—light, but not auburn—more subdued, more harmonious than that equivocal colour which too nearly approaches to red. But how much more blooming and joyous than Susan's is that exquisite face in which all Hebe smiles forth—how much airier the tread, light with health—how much rounder, if slighter still, the wave of that

undulating form! She smiles—her lips move—she is conversing with herself—she cannot be all silent, even when alone; for the sunny gladness of her nature must have vent like a bird's. But do not fancy that that gladness speaks the levity which comes from the absence of thought; it is rather from the depth of thought that it springs, as from the depth of a sea comes its music. See, while she pauses and listens, with her finger half raised to her lip, as amidst that careless jubilee of birds she hears a note more grave and sustained, the nightingale singing, by day,—(as sometimes, though rarely, he is heard—perhaps, because he misses his mate—perhaps, because he sees from his bower the creeping form of some foe to his race);—see, as she listens now to that plaintive, low-chanted warble, how quickly the smile is sobered, how the shade, soft and pensive, steals over the brow. It is but the mystic sympathy with Nature that bestows the smile or the shade. In that heart lightly moved beats the fine sense of the poet. It is the exquisite sensibility of the nerves that sends its blithe play to those spirits, and from the clearness of the atmosphere comes, warm and ethereal, the ray of that light.

And does the roof of the pastor give shelter to Helen Mainwaring's youth? Has Death taken from her the natural protectors? Those forms which we saw so full of youth and youth's heart, in that very spot,—has the grave closed on them yet? Yet!—how few attain to the age of the Psalmist! Twenty-seven years have passed since that date—how often, in those years, have the dark doors opened for the young as for the old! William Mainwaring died first, care-worn and shame-bowed: the blot on his name had cankered into his heart. Susan's life, always precarious, had struggled on, while he lived, by

the strong power of affection and will;—she would not die, for who then could console him? but at his death the power gave way. She lingered, but lingered dyingly for three years: and then, for the first time since William's death, she smiled—that smile remained on the lips of the corpse. They had had many trials, that young couple whom we left so prosperous and happy! Not till many years after their marriage had one sweet consoler been born to them. In the season of poverty, and shame, and grief, it came; and there was no pride on Mainwaring's brow when they placed his first-born in his arms. By her will, the widow consigned Helen to the joint guardianship of Mr. Fielden and her sister: but the latter was abroad, her address unknown, so the Vicar for two years had had sole charge of the orphan. She was not unprovided for. The sum that Susan brought to her husband had been long since gone, it is true—lost in the calamity which had wrecked William Mainwaring's name and blighted his prospects—but Helen's grandfather, the land-agent, had died some time subsequent to that event, and, indeed, just before William's death. He had never forgiven his son the stain on his name—never assisted, never even seen him since that fatal day—but he left to Helen a sum of about 8000*l.*—for she, at least, was innocent. In Mr. Fielden's eyes, Helen was therefore an heiress. And who amongst his small range of acquaintance was good enough for her, not only so richly portioned, but so lovely;—accomplished too, for her parents had of late years lived chiefly in France, and languages there are easily learned, and masters cheap?—Mr. Fielden knew but one, whom Providence had also consigned to his charge—the supposed son of his old pupil Ardworth; but though a tender affection existed between the

two young persons, it seemed too like that of brother and sister, to afford much ground for Mr. Fielden's anxiety or hope.

From his window the Vicar observed the still attitude of the young orphan for a few moments, then he pushed aside his books, rose, and approached her. At the sound of his tread, she woke from her reverie, and bounded lightly towards him.

"Ah, you would not see me before!" she said, in a voice in which there was the slightest possible foreign accent, which betrayed the country in which her childhood had been passed—"I peeped in twice at the window. I wanted you so much, to walk to the village. But you will come now—will you not?" added the girl, coaxingly, as she looked up at him under the shade of her straw hat.

"And what do you want in the village, my pretty Helen?"

"Why you know it is Fair day, and you promised Bessie that you would buy her a fairing—to say nothing of me."

"Very true, and I ought to look in; it will help to keep the poor people from drinking. A clergyman should mix with his parishioners in their holidays. We must not associate our office only with grief, and sickness, and preaching. We will go. And what fairing are you to have?"

"Oh, something very brilliant, I promise you! I have formed grand notions of a fair. I am sure it must be like the bazaars we read of last night, in that charming 'Tour in the East.'"

The Vicar smiled, half benignly, half anxiously. "My dear child, it is so like you to suppose a village fair must be an eastern bazaar. If you always thus judge of things by your fancy, how this sober world will deceive you, poor Helen!"

"It is not my fault—*ne me grondez pas, méchant,*" answered Helen, hang-

ing her head. "But come, sir, allow, at least, that if I let my romance, as you call it, run away with me now and then, I can still content myself with the reality. What, you shake your head still! Don't you remember the sparrow?"

"Ha! ha! yes—the sparrow that the pedlar sold you for a goldfinch; and you were so proud of your purchase, and wondered so much why you could not coax the goldfinch to sing, till at last the paint wore away, and it was only a poor little sparrow!"

"Go on! Confess: did I fret, then? Was I not as pleased with my dear sparrow, as I should have been with the prettiest goldfinch that ever sang? Does not the sparrow follow me about, and nestle on my shoulder—dear little thing! And I was right after all; for if I had not fancied it a goldfinch, I should not have bought it, perhaps. But now I would not change it for a goldfinch—no, not even for that nightingale I heard just now. So let me still fancy the poor fair a bazaar; it is a double pleasure, first to fancy the bazaar, and then to be surprised at the fair."

"You argue well," said the Vicar, as they now entered the village. "I really think, in spite of all your turn for poetry, and Goldsmith, and Cowper, that you would take as kindly to mathematics as your cousin John Ardworth, poor lad!"

"Not if mathematics have made him so grave—and so churlish, I was going to say—but that word does him wrong. Dear cousin, so kind and so rough!"

"It is not mathematics that are to blame, if he is grave and absorbed," said the Vicar, with a sigh; "it is the two cares that gnaw most—poverty and ambition."

"Nay, do not sigh: it must be such a pleasure to feel as he does, that one must triumph at last!"

"Umph!—John must have nearly

reached London by this time," said Mr. Fielden, "for he is a stout walker, and this is the third day since he left us. Well, now that he is about fairly to be called to the bar, I hope that his fever will cool, and he will settle calmly to work. I have felt great pain for him during this last visit."

"Pain! But why?"

"My dear, do you remember what I read out to you both from Sir William Temple, the night before John left us?"

Helen put her hand to her brow, and with a readiness which showed a memory equally quick and retentive, replied, "Yes; was it not to this effect! I am not sure of the exact words—'To have something we have not, and be something we are not, is the root of all evil.'"

"Well remembered, my darling!"

"Ah, but," said Helen, archly, "I remember too what my cousin replied, 'If Sir William Temple had practised his theory, he would not have been ambassador at the Hague, or——'"

"Pshaw! the boy's always ready enough with his answers," interrupted Mr. Fielden, rather petulantly. "There's the fair, my dear; more in your way, I see, than Sir William Temple's philosophy."

And Helen was right—the fair was no eastern bazaar: but how delighted that young, impressionable mind was, notwithstanding! delighted with the swings and the roundabouts, the shows, the booths, even down to the gilt gingerbread kings and queens. All minds genuinely poetical, are peculiarly susceptible to movement—that is, to the excitement of numbers. If the movement is sincerely joyous, as in the mirth of a village holiday, such a nature shares insensibly in the joy. But if the movement is a false and spurious gaiety, as in a state ball, where the impassive face and languid step are out of harmony with the evident object of the scene—then the

nature we speak of feels chilled and dejected. Hence it really is, that the more delicate and ideal order of minds soon grow inexpressibly weary of the hack routine of what are called fashionable pleasures. Hence the same person most alive to a dance on the green, would be without enjoyment at Almack's. It is not because one scene is a village green, and the other a room in King Street; nor is it because the actors in the one are of the humble, in the others of the noble class, but simply because the enjoyment in the first is visible and hearty, because in the other it is a listless and melancholy pretence. Helen fancied it was the swings and the booths that gave her that innocent exhilaration—it was not so; it was the unconscious sympathy with the crowd around her. When the poetical nature quits its own dreams for the actual world, it enters, and trans-fuses itself into the hearts and humours of others. The two wings of that spirit which we call Genius, are reverie and sympathy. But poor little Helen had no idea that she had genius. Whether chasing the butterfly, or talking fond fancies to her birds, or whether with earnest, musing eyes, watching the stars come forth, and the dark pine trees gleam into silver; whether with airy day-dreams and credulous wonder poring over the magic tales of Mirgrip or Aladdin, or whether spell-bound to awe by the solemn woes of *Lear*, or following the blind great bard into "the heaven of heavens, an earthly guest, to draw empyreal air," she obeyed but the honest and varying impulse in each change of her pliant mood; and would have ascribed with genuine humility to the vagaries of childhood, that prompt gathering of pleasure—that quick shifting sport of the fancy by which Nature binds to itself, in chains undulating as melody, the lively senses of genius.

While Helen, leaning on the Vicar's arm, thus surrendered herself to the innocent excitement of the moment, the Vicar himself smiled and nodded to his parishioners, or paused to exchange a friendly word or two with the youngest or the eldest loiterers (those two extremes of mortality which the Church so tenderly unites), whom the scene drew to its tempting vortex, when a rough-haired lad, with a leather bag strapped across his waist, turned from one of the ginger-bread booths, and touching his hat, said, "Please you, sir, I was a-coming to your house with a letter."

The Vicar's correspondence was confined and rare, despite his distant children, for letters but a few years ago were costly luxuries to persons of narrow income, and therefore the juvenile letter-carrier who plied between the Post town and the village failed to excite in his breast that indignation for being an hour or more behind his time, which would have animated one to whom the Post brings the usual event of the day. He took the letter from the boy's hand, and paid for it with a thrifty sigh, as he glanced at a handwriting unfamiliar to him—perhaps from some clergyman poorer than himself. However, that was not the place to read letters, so he put the epistle in his pocket, until Helen, who watched his countenance to see when he grew tired of the scene, kindly proposed to return home. As they gained a stile half way, Mr. Fielden remembered his letter, took it forth, and put on his spectacles. Helen stooped over the bank to gather violets; the Vicar seated himself on the stile. As he again looked at the address, the handwriting, before unfamiliar, seemed to grow indistinctly on his recollection. That bold, firm hand—thin and fine as woman's, but large and regular as man's—was too peculiar to be forgotten. He uttered a brief exclamation

of surprise and recognition, and hastily broke the seal. The contents ran thus:—

"DEAR SIR,—So many years have passed since any communication has taken place between us, that the name of Lucretia Dalibard will seem more strange to you than that of Lucretia Clavering. I have recently returned to England after long residence abroad. I perceive by my deceased sister's will that she has confided her only daughter to my guardianship, conjointly with yourself. I am anxious to participate in that tender charge. I am alone in the world—an habitual sufferer—afflicted with a partial paralysis that deprives me of the use of my limbs. In such circumstances, it is the more natural that I should turn to the only relative left me. My journey to England has so exhausted my strength, and all movement is so painful, that I must request you to excuse me for not coming in person for my niece. Your benevolence, however, will, I am sure, prompt you to afford me the comfort of her society, as soon as you can contrive some suitable arrangement for her journey. Begging you to express to Helen, in my name, the assurance of such a welcome as is due from me to my sister's child, and waiting with great anxiety your reply,—I am, dear Sir, your very faithful servant,
LUCRETIA DALIBARD.

"P.S.—I can scarcely venture to ask you to bring Helen yourself to town, but I should be glad if other inducements to take the journey afforded me the pleasure of seeing you once again. I am anxious, in addition to such details of my late sister as you may be enabled to give me, to learn something of the history of her connexion, Mr. Ardworth, in whom I felt much interested years ago, and who, I am recently informed, left an infant, his supposed son, under your care. So long absent from Eng-

land, how much have I to learn, and how little the mere gravestones tell us of the dead !”

While the Vicar is absorbed in this letter, equally unwelcome and unexpected,—while, unconscious as the daughter of Ceres gathering flowers when the Hell King drew near, of the change that awaited her and the grim presence that approached on her fate,—Helen bends still over the bank odorous with shrinking violets, we turn where the new generation equally invites our gaze, and make our first acquaintance with two persons connected with the progress of our tale.

* * * * *

The britska stopped. The servant, who had been gradually accumulating present dust and future rheumatism on the “bad eminence” of a rumble-tumble, exposed to the nipping airs of an English sky, leapt to the ground, and opened the carriage door.

“This is the best place for the view, sir—a little to the right.”

Percival St. John threw aside his book, (a volume of *Voyages*,) whistled to a spaniel dozing by his side, and descended lightly. Light was the step of the young man, and merry was the bark of the dog, as it chased from the road the startled sparrow, rising high into the clear air—favourites of Nature both, man and dog !

You had but to glance at Percival St. John, to know at once that he was of the race that toils not; the assured step spoke confidence in the world's fair smile. No care for the morrow dimmed the bold eye and the radiant bloom.

About the middle height—his slight figure, yet undeveloped, seemed not to have attained to its full growth—the darkening down only just shaded a cheek somewhat sunburnt, though naturally fair, round which

locks black as jet played sportively in the fresh air—about him altogether there was the inexpressible charm of happy youth. He scarcely looked sixteen, though above four years older; but for his firm though careless step, and the open fearlessness of his frank eye, you might have almost taken him for a girl in men's clothes, not from effeminacy of feature, but from the sparkling bloom of his youth, and from his unmistakable newness to the cares and sins of man. A more delightful vision of ingenuous boyhood opening into life, under happy auspices, never inspired with pleased yet melancholy interest the eye of half envious, half pitying age.

“And that,” mused Percival St. John—“that is London! Oh, for the Diable Boiteux to unroof me those distant houses, and show me the pleasures that lurk within!—Ah, what long letters I shall have to write home!—How the dear old Captain will laugh over them, and how my dear good mother will put down her work and sigh! Home!—Um, I miss it already. How strange and grim, after all, the huge city seems!”

His glove fell to the ground, and his spaniel mumbled it into shreds. The young man laughed, and, throwing himself on the grass, played gaily with the dog.

“Fie, Beau, sir,—fie; gloves are indigestible. Restrain your appetite, and we'll lunch together at the Clarendon.”

At this moment there arrived at the same patch of greensward a pedestrian some years older than Percival St. John—a tall, muscular, raw boned, dust-covered, travel-stained pedestrian—one of your pedestrians in good earnest—no amateur in neat gambroon, manufactured by Inkson, who leaves his carriage behind him, and walks on with his fishing-rod by choice, but a sturdy wanderer, with thick shoes and strapless trousers, a

thread-bare coat and a knapsack at his back. Yet withal, the young man had the air of a gentleman; not gentleman as the word is understood in St. James's, the gentleman of the noble and idle class, but the gentleman as the title is accorded, by courtesy, to all to whom both education and the habit of mixing with educated persons gives a claim to the distinction and imparts an air of refinement. The new comer was strongly built, at once lean and large—far more strongly built than Percival St. John, but without his look of cheerful and comely health. His complexion had not the florid hues that should have accompanied that strength of body; it was pale, though not sickly; the expression grave, the lines deep, the face strongly marked. By his side trotted painfully a wiry, yellowish, foot-sore Scotch terrier. Beau sprang from his master's caress, cocked his handsome head on one side, and suspended in silent halt his right forepaw. Percival cast over his left shoulder a careless glance at the intruder. The last heeded neither Beau nor Percival. He slipped his knapsack to the ground, and the Scotch terrier sank upon it, and curled himself up into a ball. The wayfarer folded his arms tightly upon his breast, heaved a short unquiet sigh, and cast over the giant city, from under deep-pent lowering brows, a look so earnest, so searching, so full of inexpressible, dogged, determined power, that Percival, roused out of his gay indifference, rose and regarded him with curious interest.

In the meanwhile Beau had very leisurely approached the bilious-looking terrier; and after walking three times round him, with a stare and a small sniff of superb impertinence, halted with great composure, and lifting his hind leg—O Beau, Beau, Beau! your historian blushes for your breeding, and, like Sterne's

recording angel, drops a tear upon the stain which washes it from the register—but not, alas! from the back of the bilious terrier! The space around was wide, Beau. You had all the world to choose; why select so specially for insult the single spot on which reposed the worn-out and unoffending? O, dainty Beau!—O, dainty world! Own the truth, both of ye. There is something irresistibly provocative of insult in the back of a shabby-looking dog!

The poor terrier, used to affronts, raised its heavy eyelids, and shot the gleam of just indignation from its dark eyes. But it neither stirred nor growled, and Beau, extremely pleased with his achievement, wagged his tail in triumph, and returned to his master—perhaps, in parliamentary phrase, to 'report proceedings, and ask leave to sit again.'

"I wonder," soliloquised Percival St. John, "what that poor fellow is thinking of;—perhaps he *is* poor, indeed!—no doubt of it, now I look again. And I so rich! I should like to—hem—let's see what he's made of."

Herewith Percival approached, and with all a boy's half bashful, half saucy frankness, said—"A fine prospect, sir."

The pedestrian started, and threw a rapid glance over the brilliant figure that accosted him. Percival St. John was not to be abashed by stern looks; but that glance might have abashed many a more experienced man. The glance of a squire upon a corn-law missionary, of a Crockford dandy upon a Regent-street tiger, could not have been more disdainful.

"Tush!" said the pedestrian, rudely, and turned upon his heel.

Percival coloured, and, shall we own it? was boy enough to double his fist. Little would he have been deterred by the brawn of those great arms and the girth of that Herculean

chest, if he had been quite sure that it was a proper thing to resent pugilistically so discourteous a monosyllable. The "tush!" stuck greatly in his throat. But the man, now removed to the farther verge of the hill, looked so tranquil and so lost in thought, that the short-lived anger died.

"And after all, if I was as poor as he looks, I dare say I should be just as proud," muttered Percival. "However, it's his own fault if he goes to London on foot, when I might, at least, have given him a lift. Come, Beau, sir."

With his face still a little flushed, and his hat, unconsciously, cocked fiercely on one side, Percival sauntered back to his britska.

As in a whirl of dust, the light carriage was borne by the four post-ers

down the hill, the pedestrian turned for an instant from the view before to the cloud behind, and muttered—"Ay, a fine prospect for the rich—a noble field for the poor!" The tone in which those words were said told volumes; there, spoke the pride, the hope, the energy, the ambition, which make youth laborious, manhood prosperous, age renowned.

The stranger then threw himself on the sward, and continued his silent and intent contemplation till the clouds grew red in the west. When, then, he rose, his eye was bright, his mien erect, and a smile, playing round his firm, full lips stole the moody sternness from his hard face. Throwing his knapsack once more on his back, John Ardworth went resolutely on to the great vortex.

CHAPTER I.

THE CORONATION.

THE eighth of September, 1831, was a holiday in London. William the Fourth received the crown of his ancestors in that mighty church, in which the most impressive monitors to human pomp are the monuments of the dead: the dust of conquerors and statesmen, of the wise heads and the bold hands that had guarded the thrones of departed kings, slept around; and the great men of the Modern time were assembled in homage to the monarch, to whom the prowess and the liberty of generations had bequeathed an empire in which the sun never sets. In the Abbey—thinking little of the past, caring little for the future—the immense audience gazed eagerly on the pageant that occurs but once in that division of history—the lifetime of a king. The assemblage was brilliant and imposing. The galleries sparkled with the gems of women who still upheld the celebrity for form and feature, which, from the remotest times, has been awarded to the great English race. Below, in their robes and coronets, were men who neither in the senate nor the field have shamed their fathers. Conspicuous amongst all, for grandeur of mien and stature, towered the brothers of the king; while commanding yet more the universal gaze, were seen, here the eagle features of the old hero of Waterloo, and there the majestic brow of the haughty statesman who was leading the people (while the last of the Bourbons, whom Waterloo had restored to the Tuileries, had left the orb and purple to the kindred

house, so fatal to his name,) through a stormy and perilous transition to a bloodless revolution and a new charter.

Tier upon tier, in the division set apart for them, the members of the Lower House moved and murmured above the pageant; and the coronation of the new sovereign was connected in their minds with the great measure, which, still undecided, made at that time a link between the People and the King; and arrayed against both, if not, indeed, the real Aristocracy, at least the Chamber recognised by the Constitution as its representative. Without the space, was one dense mass. Houses, from balcony to balcony, window to window, were filled as some immense theatre. Up, through the long thoroughfare to Whitehall, the eye saw that audience—A PEOPLE; and the gaze was bounded at the spot where Charles the First had passed from the banquet-house to the scaffold.

The ceremony was over; the procession had swept slowly by; the last huzza had died away. And, after staring awhile upon Orator Hunt, who had clambered up the iron palisade near Westminster Hall, to exhibit his goodly person in his court attire, the serried crowds, hurrying from the shower which then unseasonably descended, broke into large masses or lengthening columns.

In that part of London which may be said to form a boundary between its old and its new world, by which, on the one hand, you pass to Westminster, or through that gorge of the Strand which leads along endless rows

of shops that have grown up on the sites of the ancient halls of the Salisburys and the Exeters, the Buckinghams and Southamptons, to the heart of the City, built around the primal palace of the "Tower,"—while, on the other hand you pass into the new city of aristocracy and letters, of art and fashion, embracing the whilom chase of Marylebone, and the once sedge-grown waters of Pinlicko;—by this ignoble boundary, (the crossing from the Opera House, at the bottom of the Haymarket to the commencement of Charing Cross,) stood a person whose discontented countenance was in singular contrast with the general gaiety and animation of the day. This person, O gentle reader—this sour, querulous, discontented person—was a king, too, in his own walk! None might dispute it. He feared no rebel; he was harassed by no reform; he ruled without ministers, tools he had; but, when worn out, he replaced them without a pension or a sigh. He lived by taxes—but they were voluntary; and his Civil List was supplied, without demand for the redress of grievances. This person, nevertheless—not deposed, was suspended from his empire for the day. He was pushed aside; he was forgotten. He was not distinct from the crowd. Like Titus, he had lost a day—his vocation was gone. This person was the Sweeper of the Crossing!

He was a character! He was young, in the fairest prime of youth; but it was the face of an old man on young shoulders. His hair was long, thin, and prematurely streaked with grey; his face was pale, and deeply furrowed; his eyes hollow, and their stare gleamed, cold and stolid, under his bent and shaggy brows. The figure was at once fragile and ungainly—and the narrow shoulders curved in a perpetual stoop. It was a person once noticed that you would easily remember, and associate with some undefined,

painful impression. The manner was humble, but not meek; the voice was whining, but without pathos. There was a meagre, passionless, dulness about the aspect, though, at times, it quickened into a kind of avid acuteness. No one knew by what human parentage this personage came into the world. He had been reared by the charity of a stranger, crept through childhood, and misery, and rags mysteriously; and suddenly succeeded an old defunct negro in the profitable crossing whereat he is now standing. All education was unknown to him, so was all love. In those festive haunts at St. Giles's, where he who would see 'Life in London' may often discover the boy who has held his horse in the morning, dancing merrily with his chosen damsel at night, our sweeper's character was austere as Charles the Twelfth's! And, the poor creature had his good qualities! He was sensitively alive to kindness—little enough had been shown him to make the luxury the more prized from its rarity!—though fond of money he would part with it (we do not say cheerfully, but part with it still) not to mere want, indeed (for he had been too pinched and starved himself, and had grown too obtuse to pinching and to starving for the sensitiveness that prompts to charity), but to any of his companions who had done him a good service, or who had even warmed his dull heart by a friendly smile; he was honest, too—honest to the backbone. You might have trusted him with gold untold. Through the heavy clod which man's care had not moulded, nor books enlightened, nor the priest's solemn lore informed, still natural rays from the great parent source of Deity struggled, fitful and dim. He had no lawful name; none knew if sponsors had ever stood security for his sins at the sacred fount. But he had christened himself by the strange,

unchristianlike name of "Beck." There he was, then, seemingly without origin, parentage, or kindred tie—a lonesome, squalid, bloodless thing, which the great monster, London, seemed to have spawned forth of its own self—one of its sickly, miserable, rickety off-spring, whom it puts out at nurse to Penury, at school to Starvation, and, finally, and literally gives them stones for bread, with the option of the gallows or the dunghill, when the desperate off-spring calls on the giant mother for return and home!

And this creature did love something—loved, perhaps, some fellow-being—of that hereafter, when we dive into the secrets of his privacy. Meanwhile, openly and frankly, he loved his crossing; he was proud of his crossing; he was grateful to his crossing. God help thee, son of the street, why not! He had in it a double affection; that of serving and being served. He kept the crossing—if the crossing kept him. He smiled at times to himself when he saw it lie fair and brilliant amidst the mire around; it bestowed on him a sense of property! What a man may feel for a fine estate in a ring fence, Beck felt for that isthmus of the kennel which was subject to his broom! The Coronation had made one rebellious spirit, when it swept the sweeper from his crossing.

He stood then half under the colonnade of the Opera House, as the crowd now rapidly grew thinner and more scattered: and when the last carriage of a long string of vehicles had passed by, he muttered audibly—

"It'll take a deal of pains to make she right agin!"

"So you be's ere to-day, Beck!" said a ragamuffin boy, who, pushing and scrambling through his betters, now halted, and wiped his forehead as he looked at the sweeper. "Vy, ve are all ont pleasuring. Vy vont you come with ve!—lots of fun!"

The sweeper scowled at the urchin, and made no answer, but began sedulously to apply himself to the crossing.

"Vy, there isn't another sweep in the streets, Beck. His Majesty King Bill's Currnation makes all on us so appy!"

"It has made *she* unkimmon dirty!" returned Beck, pointing to the dingy crossing, scarce distinguished from the rest of the road.

The ragamuffin laughed.

"But ve be's goin' to ave Reform now, Beck. The peopul's to have their rights and libties, hand the luds is to be put down, hand beefsteaks is to be a penny a pound, and ——"

"What good will that do to she?"

"Vy, man, ve shall take turn about, and sum vun helse will sweep the crossings, and ve shall ride in sum vun helse's coach and four prads—cos vy? ve shall hall be bequels!"

"Hequels! I tells you vot, if you keeps jawing there, atween me and she, I shall vop you, Joe—cos vy—I be's the biggest!" was the answer of Beck the sweeper to Joe the ragamuffin.

The jovial Joe laughed aloud, snapped his fingers, threw up his ragged cap with a shout for King Bill, and set off scampering and whooping to join those festivities which Beck had so churlishly disdained.

Time crept on—evening began to close in, and Beck was still at his crossing, when a young gentleman on horseback, who, after seeing the procession, had stolen away for a quiet ride in the suburbs, reined in close by the crossing, and, looking round, as for some one to hold his horse, could di-cover no loiterer worthy that honour except the solitary Beck. So young was the rider, that he seemed still a boy. On his smooth countenance, all that most prepossessing in early youth left its witching stamp

A smile, at once gay and sweet, played on his lips. There was a charm, even in a certain impatient petulance, in his quick eye, and the slight contraction of his delicate brows. Almaviva might well have been jealous of such a page! He was the *beau idéal* of Cherubino. He held up his whip, with an arch sign, to the sweeper. "Follow, my man," he said, in a tone, the very command of which sounded gentle, so blithe was the movement of the lips, and so silvery the easy accent; and, without waiting, he cantered carelessly down Pall Mall.

The sweeper cast a rueful glance at his melancholy domain. But he had gained but little that day, and the offer was too tempting to be rejected. He heaved a sigh, shouldered his broom, and murmuring to himself that he would give her a last brush before he retired for the night, he put his long limbs into that swinging, shambling trot, which characterises the motion of those professional jackals, who, having once caught sight of a groomless rider, fairly hunt him down, and appear when he least expects it, the instant he dismounts.

The young rider lightly swung himself from his sleek, high-bred grey, at the door of one of the clubs in St. James's Street, patted his horse's neck, chuckled the rein to the sweeper, and scampered into the house, whistling, musically—if not from want of thought, certainly from want of care.

As he entered the club, two or three men, young, indeed, but much older, to appearance, at least, than himself, who were dining together at the same table, nodded to him their friendly greeting.

"Ah, Perce," said one, "we have only just sat down—here is a seat for you."

The boy blushed shyly, as he accepted the proposal, and the young men made room for him at the table,

with a smiling alacrity which showed that his shyness was no hindrance to his popularity.

"Who," said an elderly dandy, dining apart with one of his contemporaries—"who is that lad? One ought not to admit such mere boys into the club."

"He is the only surviving son of an old friend of ours," answered the other, dropping his eye-glass. "Young Percival St. John."

"St. John! What! Vernon St. John's son?"

"Yes."

"He has not his father's good air. These young fellows have a tone—a something—a want of self-possession, eh?"

"Very true. The fact is, that Percival was meant for the navy, and even served as a mid. for a year or so. He was a younger son, then—third, I think. The two elder ones died, and Master Percival walked into the inheritance. I don't think he is quite of age yet."

"Of age! he does not look seventeen!"

"Oh, he is more than that! I remember him in his jacket at Laugh-ton. A fine property!"

"Ay, I don't wonder those fellows are so civil to him. This claret is corked!—everything is so bad at this d—d club!—no wonder, when a troop of boys are let in!—enough to spoil any club!—don't know Larose from Lafitte. Waiter!"

Meanwhile, the talk round the table, at which sat Percival St. John, was animated, lively, and various—the talk common with young idlers; of horses, and steeple-chases, and opera-dancers, and reigning beauties, and good-humoured jests at each other. In all this babble, there was a freshness about Percival St. John's conversation, which showed that, as yet, for him life had the zest of novelty. He was more at home about

horses and steeple-chases, than about opera-dancers, and beauties, and the small scandals of town. Talk on these latter topics did not seem to interest him; on the contrary, almost to pain. Shy and modest as a girl, he coloured or looked aside when his more hardened friends boasted of assignments and love-affairs. Spirited, gay, and manly enough in all really manly points, the virgin bloom of innocence was yet visible in his frank charming manner. And often, out of respect for his delicacy, some hearty son of pleasure stopped short in his narrative, or lost the point of his anecdote; and yet so loveable was Percival in his good-humour, his *naïveté*, his joyous entrance into innocent joy, that his companions were scarcely conscious of the *gêne* and restraint he imposed on them. Those merry, dark eyes, and that flashing smile, were conviviality of themselves. They brought with them a contagious cheerfulness, which compensated for the want of corruption.

Night had set in. St. John's companions had departed to their several haunts, and Percival himself stood on the steps of the club, resolving that he would join the crowds that swept through the streets to gaze on the illuminations, when he perceived Beck (still at the rein of his dozing horse), whom he had quite forgot till that moment. Laughing at his own want of memory, Percival put some silver into Beck's hand—more silver than Beck had ever before received for similar service—and said:

"Well, my man, I suppose I can trust you to take my horse to his stables—No. —, the Mews, behind Curzon-street. Poor fellow, he wants his supper,—and you, too, I suppose!"

Beck smiled—a pale, hungry smile, and pulled his forelock politely—"I can take the oss werry safely, your honor."

"Take him, then, and good even-

ing; but don't get on, for your life."

"Oh, no, sir; I never gets on: 'taint in my ways."

And Beck slowly led the horse through the crowd, till he vanished from Percival's eyes.

Just then, a man passing through the street, paused as he saw the young gentleman on the steps of the club, and said, gaily, "Ah; how do you do? Pretty faces in plenty out to-night! Which way are you going?"

"That is more than I can tell you, Mr. Varney. I was just thinking which turn to take—the right or the left."

"Then let me be your guide," and Varney offered his arm.

Percival accepted the courtesy; and the two walked on towards Piccadilly. Many a kind glance from the milliners and maid-servants, whom the illuminations drew abroad, roved, somewhat impartially, towards St. John and his companion; but they dwelt longer on the last, for *there*, at least, they were sure of a return. Varney, if not in his first youth, was still in the prime of life; and Time had dealt with him so leniently, that he retained all the personal advantages of youth itself. His complexion still was clear; and as only his upper lip, decorated with a slight, silken, and well-trimmed moustache, was unshaven, the contour of the face added to the juvenility of his appearance by the rounded symmetry it betrayed. His hair escaped from his hat in fair unchanged luxuriance. And the nervous figure, agile as a panther's, though broad-shouldered and deep chested, denoted all the slowness and elasticity of twenty-five, combined with the muscular power of forty. His dress was rather fantastic—too showy for the good taste which is habitual to the English gentleman—and there was a peculiarity in his gait almost approaching to a strut, which bespoke

a desire of effect—a consciousness of personal advantages—equally opposed to the mien and manner of Percival's usual companions; yet withal, even the most fastidious would have hesitated to apply to Gabriel Varney the epithet of 'vulgar.' Many turned to look again; but it was not to remark the dress, or the slight swagger:—an expression of reckless, sinister power in the countenance—something of vigour and determination even in that very walk, foppish as it would have been in most, made you sink all observation of the mere externals, in a sentiment of curiosity towards the man himself. He seemed a somebody—not a somebody of conventional rank, but a somebody of personal individuality—an artist perhaps, a poet, or a soldier in some foreign service, but certainly a man whose name you would expect to have heard of. Amongst the common mob of passengers he stood out in marked and distinct relief.

"I feel at home in a crowd," said Varney. "Do you understand me?"

"I think so," answered Percival. "If ever I could become distinguished, I, too, should feel at home in a crowd."

"You have ambition, then? you mean to become distinguished?" asked Varney, with a sharp, searching look.

There was a deeper and steadier flash than usual from Percival's dark eyes, and a manlier glow over his cheek, at Varney's question. But he was slow in answering; and when he did so, his manner had all its wonted mixture of graceful bashfulness and gay candour.

"Our rise does not always depend on ourselves. We are not all born great, nor do we all have 'greatness thrust on us.'"

"One can be what one likes, with your fortune," said Varney; and there was a growl of envy in his voice.

"What, be a painter like you! Ha, ha!"

"Faith," said Varney, "at least, if you could paint at all, you would have what I have not—praise and fame."

Percival pressed kindly on Varney's arm. "Courage! you will get justice some day!"

Varney shook his head. "Bah! there is no such thing as justice: all are underrated or overrated. Can you name one man whom you think is estimated by the public at his precise value? As for present popularity, it depends on two qualities—each singly, or both united—cowardice and courtlatanism; that is, servile compliance with the taste and opinion of the moment, or a quack's spasmodic efforts at originality. But why bore you on such matters? There are things more attractive round us. A good uncle that, eh? Why, pardon me, it is strange; but you don't seem to care much for women!"

"Oh, yes, I do," said Percival, with a sly demureness. "I am very fond of—my mother!"

"Very proper and filial," said Varney, laughing, "and does your love for the sex stop there?"

"Well, and in truth I fancy so—pretty nearly. You know my grandmother is not alive! But *that* is something really worth looking at!" And Percival pointed, almost with a child's delight, at an illumination more brilliant than the rest.

"I suppose, when you come of age, you will have all the cedars at Laughton hung with coloured lamps. Ah, you must ask me there, some day. I should so like to see the old place again."

"You never saw it, I think you say, in my poor father's time?"

"Never."

"Yet you knew him."

"But slightly."

"And you never saw my mother?"

"No; but she seems to have such

influence over you, that I am sure she must be a very superior person—rather proud, I suppose.”

“Proud—no; that is, not exactly proud, for she is very meek and very affable. But yet——”

“But yet—you hesitate—she would not like you to be seen, perhaps, walking in Piccadilly with Gabriel Varney, the natural son of old Sir Miles’s librarian,—Gabriel Varney the painter—Gabriel Varney the adventurer!”

“As long as Gabriel Varney is a man without stain on his character and honour, my mother would only be pleased that I should know an able and accomplished person, whatever his origin or parentage. But my mother would be sad if she knew me intimate with a Bourbon or a Raffaele, the first in rank or the first in genius, if either prince or artist had lost or even sullied his ‘scutcheon of gentleman. In a word, she is most sensitive as to honour and conscience—all else she disregards.”

“Hem!” Varney stooped down, as if examining the polish of his boot, while he continued, carelessly—“Impossible to walk the streets and keep one’s boots out of the mire! Well—and you agree with your mother?”

“It would be strange if I did not. When I was scarcely four years old, my poor father used to lead me through the long picture-gallery at Laughton, and say, ‘Walk through life as if those brave gentlemen looked down on you.’ And,” added St. John, with his ingenuous smile—“my mother would put in her word—‘And those unstained women, too, my Percival!’”

There was something noble and touching in the boy’s low accents as he said this; it gave the key to his unusual modesty, and his frank, healthful innocence of character.

The devil in Varney’s lip sneered mockingly.

“My young friend, you have never loved yet.—Do you think you ever shall?”

“I have dreamed that I could love one day. But I can wait.”

Varney was about to reply, when he was accosted abruptly by three men of that exaggerated style of dress and manner, which is implied by the vulgar appellation of ‘Tigrish.’ Each of the three men had a cigar in his mouth—each seemed flushed with wine. One wore long brass spurs, and immense moustaches; another was distinguished by an enormous surface of black satin cravat, across which meandered a Pactolus of gold chain; a third had his coat laced and braided, *à la Polonoise*, and pinched and padded *à la Russe*, with trousers shaped to the calf of a sinewy leg, and a glass screwed into his right eye.”

“Ah, Gabriel!—ah, Varney!—ah, prince of good fellows, well met! You sup with us to-night at little *Célestes*—we were just going in search of you.”

“Who’s your friend—one of us?” whispered a second.

And the third screwed his arm tight and lovingly into Varney’s.

Gabriel, despite his habitual assurance, looked abashed for a moment, and would have extricated himself from cordialities not at that moment welcome; but he saw that his friends were too far gone in their cups to be easily shaken off, and he felt relieved when Percival, after a dissatisfied glance at the three, said, quietly—“I must detain you no longer—I shall soon look in at your studio;” and without waiting for answer, slid off and was lost among the crowd.

Varney walked on with his new found friends, unheeding for some moments their loose remarks and familiar banter. At length he shook off his abstraction, and surrendering himself to the coarse humours of his companions, soon eclipsed them all

by the gusto of his slang and the mocking profligacy of his sentiments; for here he no longer played a part, or suppressed his grosser instincts. That uncurbed dominion of the senses, to which his very boyhood had abandoned itself, found a willing slave in the man. Even the talents themselves that he displayed came from the cultivation of the sensual. His eye, studying externals, made him a painter—his ear, quick and practised, a musician. His wild, prodigal fancy rioted on every excitement, and brought him in a vast harvest of experience in knowledge of the frailties and the vices on which it indulged its vagrant experiments. Men who over-cultivate the art that connects itself with the senses, with little counterpoise from the reason and pure intellect, are apt to be dissipated and irregular in their lives. This is frequently noticeable in the biographies of musicians, singers, and painters, less so in poets, because he who deals with words, not signs and tones, must perpetually compare his senses with the pure images of which the senses only see the appearances; in a word, he must employ his intellect, and his self-education must be large and comprehensive. But with most real genius, however fed merely by the senses—most really great painters, singers, and musicians, however easily led astray into temptation, the richness of the soil throws up abundant good qualities to countervail or redeem the evil—they are usually compassionate, generous, sympathising. That Varney had not such beauties of soul and temperament it is unnecessary to add—principally, it is true, because of his nurture, education, parental example, the utter corruption in which his childhood and youth had passed—partly because he had no *real* genius; it was a false apparition of the divine spirit, reflected from the

exquisite perfection of his frame, (which rendered all his senses so vigorous and acute,) and his riotous fancy, and his fitful energy, which was capable at times of great application, but not of definite purpose or earnest study. All about him was flashy and hollow. He had not the natural subtlety and depth of mind that had characterised his terrible father. The graft of the opera dancer was visible on the stock of the scholar; wholly without the habits of method and order, without the patience, without the mathematical, calculating brain of Dalibard, he played wantonly with the horrible and loathsome wickedness of which Olivier had made dark and solemn study. Extravagant and lavish, he spent money as fast as he gained it; he threw away all chances of eminence and career. In the midst of the direst plots of his villany, or the most energetic pursuit of his art, the poorest excitement, the veriest bauble would draw him aside. His heart was with Fabri in the sty, his fancy with Aladdin in the palace. To make a show was his darling object; he loved to create effect by his person, his talk, his dress, as well as by his talents. Living from hand to mouth, crimes through which it is not our intention to follow him, had at times made him rich to-day, for vices to make him poor again to-morrow. What he called "luck," or "his star," had favoured him—he *was not hanged!*—he lived; and, as the greater part of his unscrupulous career had been conducted in foreign lands, and under other names,—in his own name, and in his own country, though something scarcely to be defined, but equivocal and provocative of suspicion, made him displeasing to the prudent, and vaguely alarmed the experience of the sober,—still no positive accusation was attached to the *general*

integrity of his character; and *his* mere dissipation of his habits was naturally little known out of his familiar circle. Hence, he had the most presumptuous confidence in himself—a confidence native to his courage, and confirmed by his experience. His conscience was so utterly obtuse, that he might almost be said to present the phenomenon of a man without conscience at all. Unlike Conrad, he did not “know himself a villain;” all that he knew of himself was, that he was a remarkably clever fellow, without prejudice or superstition. That, with all his gifts, he had not succeeded better in life, he ascribed carelessly to the surpassing wisdom of his philosophy. He could have done better if he had enjoyed himself less—but was not enjoyment the be all and end all of this little life? More often, indeed, in the moods of his bitter envy, he would lay the fault upon the world. How great he could have been if he had been rich and high born! Oh, he was made to spend, not to save—to command, not to fawn! He was not formed to plod through the dull mediocrities of fortune; he must toss up for the All or the Nothing! It was no control over himself that made Varney now turn his thoughts from certain grave designs on Percival St. John, to the brutal debauchery of his three companions,—rather he then yielded most to his natural self. And when the morning star rose over the night he passed with low profligates and venal nymphs,—when, over the fragments on the board and emptied bottles, and drunken riot, dawn gleamed and saw him in all the pride of his magnificent organisation, and the cynicism of his measured vice:—fair, fresh, and blooming amidst those maudlin eyes, and flushed cheeks, and reeling figures;—laughing hideously over the spectacle he had provoked, and

kicking aside, with a devil's scorn, the prostrate form of the favoured partner whose head had rested on his bosom, as alone with a steady step he passed the threshold, and walked into the fresh, healthful air;—Gabriel Varney enjoyed the fell triumph of his hell-born vanity, and revelled in his sentiment of superiority and power.

Meanwhile, on quitting Varney, young Percival strolled on as the whim directed him. Turning down the Haymarket, he gained the colonnade of the Opera House. The crowd there was so dense that his footsteps were arrested, and he leant against one of the columns in admiration of the various galaxies in view. In front blazed the rival stars of the United Service Club and the Athenæum;—to the left, the quaint and peculiar device which lighted up Northumberland House;—to the right, the anchors, cannons, and bombs, which typified ingeniously the martial attributes of the Ordnance Office.

At that moment there were three persons connected with this narrative within a few feet of each other, distinguished from the multitude by the feelings with which each regarded the scene and felt the jostle of the crowd. Percival St. John, in whom the harmless sense of pleasure was yet vivid and unsatiated, caught from the assemblage only that physical hilarity which heightened his own spirits. If in a character as yet so undeveloped—to which the large passions and stern ends of life were as yet unknown—stirred some deeper and more musing thoughts and speculations, giving gravity to the habitual smile on his rosy lip, and steadying the play of his sparkling eyes, he would have been at a loss himself to explain the dim sentiment, and the vague desire.

Screened by another column from

the pressure of the mob, with his arms folded on his breast, a man some few years older in point of time—many years older in point of character—gazed (with thoughts how turbulent—with ambition how profound!) upon the dense and dark masses that covered space and street far as the eye could reach. He, indeed, could not have said, with Varney, that he was “at home in a crowd.” For a crowd did not fill him with the sense of his own individual being and importance, but grappled him to its mighty breast with the thousand tissues of a common destiny. Who shall explain and disentangle those high, and restless, and interwoven emotions with which intellectual ambition, honourable and ardent, gazes upon that solemn thing with which, in which, for which it lives and labours—the Human Multitude? To that abstracted, solitary man, the illumination, the festivity,

the curiosity, the holiday, were nothing, or but as fleeting phantoms and vain seemings. In his heart's eye, he saw before him but the PEOPLE, the shadow of an everlasting audience—audience at once and judge.

And literally touching him as he stood, the ragged sweeper, who had returned in vain to devote a last care to his beloved charge, stood arrested with the rest, gazing joylessly on the blazing lamps, dead as the stones he heeded, to the young vivacity of the one man, the solemn visions of the other. So, O London, amidst the universal holiday to monarch and to mob, in those three souls lived the three elements, which, duly mingled and administered, make thy vice and thy virtue—thy glory and thy shame—thy labour and thy luxury; pervading the palace and the street—the hospital and the prison;—enjoyment, which is pleasure—energy, which is action—torpor, which is want!

CHAPTER II.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

SUDDENLY across the gaze of Percival St. John there flashed a face that woke him from his abstraction, as a light awakes the sleeper. It was as a recognition of something seen dimly before—a truth coming out from a dream. It was not the mere beauty of that face (and beautiful it was), that arrested his eye and made his heart beat more quickly—it was rather that nameless and inexplicable sympathy which constitutes love at first sight;—a sort of impulse and instinct common to the dullest as the quickest—the hardest reason as the liveliest fancy. Plain Cobbett, seeing before the cottage door, at her homeliest of house work, the girl of whom he said—"That girl should be my wife;" and Dante, first thrilled by the vision of Beatrice, are alike true types of a common experience: Whatever of love sinks the deepest is felt at first sight; it streams on us abrupt from the cloud, a lightning flash—a destiny revealed to us face to face.

Now, there was nothing poetical in the place or the circumstance, still less in the companionship in which this fair creature startled the virgin heart of that careless boy; she was leaning on the arm of a stout, rosy-faced matron in a puce-coloured gown, who was flanked on the other side by a very small, very spare man, with a very wee face, the lower part of which was enveloped in an immense belcher. Besides these two incumbances, the stout lady contrived to carry in her hands an umbrella, a basket, and a pair of pattens.

In the midst of the strang-, n-

familiar emotion which his eye conveyed to his heart, Percival's ear was displeasingly jarred by the loud, bluff, hearty voice of the girl's female companion—

"Gracious me! if that is not John Ardworth; who'd have thought it! Why, John—I say, John!" and lifting her umbrella horizontally, she poked aside two city clerks in front of her, wheeled round the little man on her left, upon whom the clerks simultaneously bestowed the appellation of "feller," and driving him, as being the sharpest and thinnest wedge at hand, through a dense knot of some half-a-dozen gapers, while following his involuntary progress she looked defiance on the malcontents, she succeeded in clearing her way to the spot where stood the young man she had discovered. The ambitious dreamer, for it was he, thus detected and disturbed, looked embarrassed for a moment, as the stout lady, touching him with the umbrella, said,

"Well, I declare, if this is not too bad! You sent word that you should not be able to come out with us to see the 'luminations, and here you are as large as life!"

"I did not think at the moment you wrote to me, that——"

"Oh, stuff!" interrupted the stout woman, with a significant, good-humoured shake of her head, "I know what's what; tell the truth, and shame the gentleman who objects to showing his feet. You are a wild fellow, John Ardworth—you are! you like looking after the pretty faces—you do—you do—ha, ha, ha! very natural! So

did you once—did not you, Mr. Mivers—did not you, eh? men must be men—they always are men, and it's my belief that men they always will be!"

With this sage conjecture into the future, the lady turned to Mr. Mivers, who, thus appealed to, extricated with some difficulty his chin from the folds of his belcher, and putting up his small face, said, in a small voice, "Yes, I was a wild fellow once, but you have tamed me! you have, Mrs. M."

And therewith the chin sunk again into the belcher, and the small voice died into a small sigh.

The stout lady glanced benignly at her spouse, and then resuming her address, to which Ardworth listened with a half frown and a half smile, observed, encouragingly—

"Yes, there's nothing like a lawful wife, to break a man in, as you will find some day. Howsomever, your time's not come for the Altar, so suppose you give Helen your arm, and come with us."

"Do," said Helen, in a sweet, coaxing voice.

Ardworth bent down his rough, earnest face to Helen's, and an evident pleasure relaxed its thoughtful lines. "I cannot resist you," he began, and then he paused and frowned. "Pish," he added, "I was talking folly; but what head would not you turn? Resist you I must, for I am on my way now to my drudgery. Ask me anything, some years hence, when I have time to be happy, and then see if I am the bear you now call me."

"Well," said Mrs. Mivers, emphatically, "are you coming, or are you not? Don't stand there, shilly-shally."

"Mrs. Mivers," returned Ardworth, with a kind of sly humour, "I am sure you would be very angry with your husband's excellent shepmen, if that was the way they spoke to your customers. If some unhappy dropper-

in—some lady who came to buy a yard or so of Irish, was suddenly dazzled, as I am, by a luxury wholly unforeseen and eagerly coveted—a splendid lace veil, or a ravishing cashmere, or whatever else you ladies desiderate, and while she was balancing between prudence and temptation, your foreman exclaimed—'Don't stand shilly-shally,'—come, I put it to you."

"Stuff!" said Mrs. Mivers.

"Alas! unlike your imaginary customer—(I hope so, at least, for the sake of your till)—prudence gets the better of me; unless," added Ardworth, irresolutely, and glancing at Helen—"unless, indeed, you are not sufficiently protected, and——"

"PurTECTED!" exclaimed Mrs. Mivers, in an indignant tone of astonishment, and agitating the formidable umbrella, "as if I was not enough, with the help of this here domestic commodity, to purTECT a dozen such. PurTECTED, indeed!"

"John is right, Mrs. M.; business is business," said Mr. Mivers. "Let us move on—we stop the way, and those idle lads are listening to us, and sniggering."

"Sniggering!" exclaimed the gentle helpmate; "I should like to see those who presume for to snigger;" and as she spoke she threw a look of defiance around her. Then, having thus satisfied her resentment, she prepared to obey, as no doubt she always did, her lord and master. Suddenly, with a practised movement, she wheeled round Mr. Mivers, and taking care to protrude before him the sharp point of the umbrella, cut her way through the crowd like the scythed ear of the ancient Britons, and was soon lost amidst the throng, although her way might be guessed by a slight ripple of peculiar agitation along the general stream, accompanied by a prolonged murmur of reproach or expostulation which gradually died in the distance.

Ardworth gazed after the fair form of Helen with a look of regret; and, when it vanished,—with a slight start and a suppressed sigh, he turned away, and with the long, steady stride of a strong man, cleared his path through the Strand, towards the printing-office of a journal on which he was responsibly engaged.

But Percival, who had caught much of the conversation that took place so near him—Percival, happy child of idleness and whim, had no motive of labour and occupation to stay the free impulse of his heart, and his heart drew him on, with magnetic attraction, in the track of the first being that had ever touched the sweet instincts of youth.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Mivers was destined to learn—though, perhaps, the lesson little availed her—that to get smoothly through this world it is necessary to be supple as well as strong; and though, up to a certain point, man or woman may force the way by poking umbrellas into people's ribs, and treading mercilessly upon people's toes, yet the endurance of ribs and toes has its appointed limits.

Helen, half terrified, also half amused by her companion's robust resolution of purpose, had in Mrs. Mivers' general courage and success that confidence which the weak repose in the strong, and though, whenever she turned her eyes from the illuminations, she besought Mrs. Mivers to be more gentle, yet, seeing that they had gone safely from St. Paul's to St. James's, she had no distinct apprehension of any practically ill results from the energies she was unable to mitigate. But now, having just gained the end of St. James's Street, Mrs. Mivers at last found her match. The crowd here halted, thick and serried, to gaze in peace upon the brilliant vista which the shops and eaves of that street presented.

Coaches and carriages had paused in their line, and immediately before Mrs. Mivers stood three very thin, small women, whose dress bespoke them to be of the humblest class.

"Make way, there—make way, my good women, make way!" cried Mrs. Mivers, equally disdainful of the size and the rank of the obstructing parties.

"Arrah, and what shall we make way for the like of you, you ould busy body?" said one of the dames, turning round, and presenting a very formidable squint to the broad optics of Mrs. Mivers.

Without deigning a reply, Mrs. Mivers had recourse to her usual tactics. Umbrella and husband went right between two of the feminine obstructives; and to the inconceivable astonishment and horror of the assailable, husband and umbrella instantly vanished. The three small furies had pounced upon both. They were torn from their natural owner—they were hurried away; the stream behind, long fretted at the path so abruptly made amidst it, closed in, joyous with a thousand waves. Mrs. Mivers and Helen were borne forward in one way, the umbrella and the husband in the other: at the distance a small voice was heard—"Don't you!—don't! Be quiet! Mrs.—Mrs. M.! Oh! oh! Mrs. M.!" At that last repetition of the beloved and familiar initial, uttered in a tone of almost superhuman anguish, the conjugal heart of Mrs. Mivers was afflicted beyond control.

"Wait here a moment, my dear! I'll just give it them—that's all!" And in another moment Mrs. Mivers was heard bustling, scolding, till all trace of her whereabouts was gone from the eyes of Helen. Thus left alone, in exceeding shame and dismay, the poor girl cast a glance around. The glance was caught by two young men, whose station, in these days

when dress is an equivocal designator of rank, could not be guessed by their exterior. They might be dandies from the west—they might be clerks from the east.

"By Jove," exclaimed one, "that's a sweet pretty girl!" and, by a sudden movement of the crowd, they both found themselves close to Helen.

"Are you alone, my dear?" said a voice rudely familiar.

Helen made no reply—the tone of the voice frightened her. A gap in the mob showed the space towards Cleveland Row, which, leading to no illuminations, was vacant and solitary. She instantly made towards this spot; the two men followed her,—the bolder and elder one occasionally trying to catch hold of her arm. At last, as she passed the last house to the left, a house then owned by One who, at once far-sighted and impetuous, affable and haughty—characterised alike by solid virtues and brilliant faults—would, but for hollow friends, have triumphed over countless foes, and enjoyed at last that brief day of stormy power for which statesmen resign the health of manhood and the hope of age—as she passed that memorable mansion, she suddenly perceived that the space before her had no thoroughfare, and, while she paused in dismay, her pursuers blockaded her escape.

One of them now fairly seized her hand: "Nay, pretty one, why so cruel? But one kiss—only one!" He endeavoured to pass his arm round her waist while he spoke. Helen eluded him, and darted forward, to find her way stopped by her persecutor's companion, when, to her astonishment, a third person gently pushed aside the form that impeded her path, approached, and looking mute defiance at the unchivalric molesters, offered her his arm. Helen gave but one timid hurrying glance to her unexpected protector: some-

thing in his face, his air, his youth, appealed at once to her confidence. Mechanically, and scarce knowing what she did, she laid her trembling hand on the arm held out to her.

The two Lotharios looked foolish. One pulled up his shirt collar, the other turned, with a forced laugh, on his heel. Boy as Percival seemed, and little more than boy as he was, there was a dangerous fire in his eye, and an expression of spirit and ready courage in his whole countenance, which, if it did not awe his tall rivals, made them at least unwilling to have a scene, and provoke the interference of the policemen, one of whom was now seen walking slowly up to the spot. They, therefore, preserved a discomfited silence; and Percival St. John, with his heart going ten knots a beat, sailed triumphantly off with his prize.

Scarcely knowing whither he went, certainly forgetful of Mr. Mivers, in his anxiety to escape at least from the crowd, Percival walked on till he found himself with his fair charge under the trees of St. James's Park.

Then Helen, recovering herself, paused, and said, alarmed, "But this is not my way—I must go back to the street!"

"How foolish I am—that is true!" said Percival, looking confused. "I—I felt so happy to be with you, feel your hand on my arm, and think that we were all by ourselves, that—that—but you have dropped your flowers!"

And as a bouquet Helen wore, dislodged somehow or other, fell to the ground, both stooped to pick it up, and their hands met. At that touch, Percival felt a strange tremble, which perhaps communicated itself (for such things are contagious) to his fair companion. Percival had got the nosegay, and seemed willing to detain it, for he bent his face lingeringly over the flowers. At length, he turned his

bright ingenuous eyes to Helen, and singling one rose from the rest, said beseechingly—"May I keep this? See, it is not so fresh as the others."

"I am sure, sir," said Helen, colouring, and looking down, "I owe you so much that I should be glad if a poor flower could repay it."

"A poor flower! You don't know what a prize this is to me!"

Percival placed the rose reverently in his bosom, and the two moved back slowly, as if reluctant both, through the old palace court into the street.

"Is that lady related to you?" asked Percival, looking another way, and dreading the reply: "Not your mother, surely!"

"Oh, no!—I have no mother!"

"Forgive me!" said Percival, for the tone of Helen's voice told him that he had touched the spring of a household sorrow. "And," he added, with a jealousy that he could scarcely restrain from making itself evident in his accent, "that gentleman who spoke to you under the Colonnade,—I have seen him before, but where I cannot remember. In fact, you have put everything but yourself out of my head. Is he related to you?"

"He is my cousin."

"Cousin!" repeated Percival, pouting a little; and again there was silence.

"I don't know how it is," said Percival, at last, and very gravely, as if much perplexed by some abstruse thought, "but I feel as if I had known you all my life. I never felt this for any one before."

There was something so irresistibly innocent in the boy's serious, wondering tone, as he said these words, that a smile, in spite of herself, broke out amongst the thousand dimples round Helen's charming lips. Perhaps the little witch felt a touch of coquetry for the first time.

Percival, who was looking sidelong

into her face, saw the smile, and said, drawing up his head, and shaking back his jetty curls, "I dare say you are laughing at me as a mere boy; but I am older than I look. I am sure I am much older than you are. Let me see, you are seventeen, I suppose?"

Helen, getting more and more at her ease, nodded playful assent.

"And I am not far from twenty-one. Ah! you may well look surprised—but so it is. An hour ago I felt a mere boy; now I shall never feel a boy again!"

Once more there was a long pause, and before it was broken they had gained the very spot in which Helen had lost her friend.

"Why, bless us, and save us!" exclaimed a voice 'loud as a trumpet,' but not 'with a silver sound,' "there you are, after all;" and Mrs. Mivers (husband and umbrella both regained) planted herself full before them.

"Oh, a pretty fright I have been in; and now to see you coming along as cool as if nothing had happened—as if the humbrella had not lost its hivery ancle—it's quite purvoking. Dear, dear! what we have gone through! And who is this young gentleman, pray?"

Helen whispered some hesitating explanation, which Mrs. Mivers did not seem to receive as graciously as Percival, poor fellow, had a right to expect. She stared him full in the face, and shook her head suspiciously when she saw him a little confused by the survey. Then, tucking Helen tightly under her arm, she walked back towards the Haymarket, merely saying to Percival—

"Much obligated, and good night. I have a long journey to take to set down this here young lady, and the best thing we can all do is to get home as fast as we can, and have a refreshing cup of tea—that's my mind, sir. Excuse me!"

Thus abruptly dismissed, poor Percival gazed wistfully on his Helen, as she was borne along, and was somewhat comforted at seeing her look back, with (as he thought) a touch of regret in her parting smile. Then suddenly it flashed across him how sadly he had wasted his time. Novice that he was, he had not even learned the name and address of his new acquaintance. At that thought he hurried on through the crowd, but only reached the object of his pursuit just in time to see her placed in a coach, and to catch a full view of the luxuriant proportions of Mrs. Mivers as she followed her into the vehicle.

As the lumbering conveyance (the only coach on the stand) heaved itself into motion, Percival's eye fell on the sweeper, who was still leaning on his broom, and who, in grateful recognition of the unwonted generosity that had repaid his service, touched his ragged hat, and smiled drowsily on his young customer. Love sharpens the wit, and animates the timid;—a thought worthy of the most experienced, inspired Percival St. John: he hurried to the sweeper, laid his hand on his patchwork coat, and said, breathlessly—

"You see that coach turning into the square; follow it—find out where it sets down. There's a sovereign for you—another if you succeed. Call and tell me your success. Number — Curzon-street!—off, like a shot!"

The sweeper nodded and grinned; it was possibly not his first commission of a similar kind. He darted down the street; and Percival, following him with equal speed, had the satisfaction to see him, as the coach traversed St. James's-square, comfortably seated on the footboard.

Beck, dull elod, knew nothing, cared nothing, felt nothing as to the motives or purpose of his employer. Honest love or selfish vice, it was the

same to him. He saw only the one sovereign which, with astounded eyes, he still gazed at on his palm, and the vision of the sovereign that was yet to come:

"Scandit æratas vitifera naves
Cura: nec turmas equitum relinquit."

It was the Selfishness of London—calm and stolid, whether on the track of innocence or at the command of guile.

At half-past ten o'clock, Percival St. John was seated in his room, and the sweeper stood at the threshold. Wealth and penury seemed brought into visible contact in the persons of the visitor and the host. The dwelling is held by some to give an index to the character of the owner: if so, Percival's apartments differed much from those generally favoured by young men of rank and fortune. On the one hand it had none of that affectation of superior taste, evinced in marqueterie and gilding, or the more picturesque discomfort of high backed chairs and mediæval curiosities which prevails in the daintier abodes of fastidious bachelors. Nor, on the other hand, had it the sporting character which individualises the ruder juveniles '*qui gaudent equis,*' betrayed by engravings of racers, and celebrated fox-hunts, relieved, perhaps, if the Nimrod condescend to a cross of the Lovelace, with portraits of *figurantes*, and ideals of French sentiment, entitled, "*Le Soir,*" or "*La Recolle,*" "*L'Espoir,*" or "*L'Abandon.*" But the rooms had a physiognomy of their own, from their exquisite neatness and cheerful simplicity. The chintz draperies were lively with gay flowers; books filled up the niches; here and there were small pictures, chiefly sea-pieces—well chosen, well placed.

There might, indeed, have been something almost effeminate in a certain inexpressible purity of taste,

and a cleanliness of detail that seemed actually brilliant, had not the folding-doors allowed a glimpse of a plainer apartment, with fencing foils and boxing-gloves ranged on the wall, and a cricket-bat resting carelessly in the corner. These gave a redeeming air of manliness to the rooms, but it was the manliness of a boy; half girl, if you please, in the purity of thought that pervaded one room, all boy in the playful pursuits that were made manifest in the other. Simple, however, as this abode really was, poor Beck had never been admitted to the sight of anything half so fine. He stood at the door for a moment, and stared about him, bewildered and dazzled. But his natural torpor to things that concerned him not, soon brought to him the same stoicism that philosophy gives the strong; and after the first surprise, his eye quietly settled on his employer. St. John rose eagerly from the sofa, on which he had been contemplating the starlit tree-tops of Chesterfield Gardens—

"Well, well?" said Percival.

"Hold Brompton," said Beck, with a brevity of word and clearness of perception worthy a Spartan.

"Old Brompton?" repeated Percival, thinking the reply the most natural in the world.

"In a big ous by his-self," continued Beck, "with a igh vall in front."

"You would know it again?"

"In course; he's so wery pecular."

"He? who?"

"Vy, the ous. The young lady got out, and the hold folks driv back. I did not go arter *them*!" and Beck looked sly.

"So;—I must find out the name."

"I axed at the public," said Beck, proud of his diplomacy. "They keeps a sarvant vot takes half a pint at her meals. The young lady's ma be a foriuer."

"A foreigner! Then she lives there with her mother?"

"So they 'spose at the public."

"And the name?"

Beck shook his head. "'Tis a French un, your onor; but the sarvaut's is Martha."

"You must meet me at Brompton, near the turnpike, to-morrow, and show me the house."

"Vy, I's in bizness all day, please your onor."

"In bizness?"

"I's the place of the crossing," said Beck, with much dignity; "but arter eight I goes where I likes."

"To-morrow evening, then, at half-past eight, by the turnpike."

Beck pulled his forelock assentingly.

"There's the sovereign I promised you, my poor fellow—much good may it do you. Perhaps you have some father or mother whose heart it will glad."

"I never had no such thing," replied Beck, turning the coin in his hand.

"Well, don't spend it in drink."

"I never drinks nothing but svipes."

"Then," said Percival, laughingly, "what, my good friend, will you ever do with your money?"

Beck put his finger to his nose, sunk his voice into a whisper, and replied, solemnly—"I as a mattris."

"A mistress," said Percival; "oh, a sweetheart! Well; but if she's a good girl, and loves you, she'll not let you spend your money on her."

"I haint such a ninny as that," said Beck, with majestic contempt. "I 'spises the flat that is done brown by the blowens. I as a mattris."

"A mattress! a mattress! Well, what has that to do with the money?"

"Vy, I lines it."

Percival looked puzzled. "Oh," said he, after a thoughtful pause, and in a tone of considerable compassion, "I understand; you sew your money in your mattress. My poor, poor lad, you can do better than that!—there are the savings banks."

Beck looked frightened: "I opes your onor vont tell no vun. I opes no vun vont go for to put my tin vere I shall know nothing vatsomever about it. Now, I knows vere it is—and I lays on it."

"Do you sleep more soundly when you lie on your treasure?"

"No; it's hodd," said Beck, musingly, "but the more I lines it, the vorse I sleeps."

Perceval laughed; but there was melancholy in his laughter; something in the forlorn, benighted, fatherless, squalid miser, went to the core of his open, generous heart.

"Do you ever read your Bible?" said he, after a pause; "—or even the newspaper?"

"I does not read nothing, eos vy, I haint been made a schollard, like swell Tim, as was lagged for a forgery."

"You go to church on a Sunday?"

"Yes; I 'as a weekly hingagement at the New Road."

"What do you mean?"

"To see arter the gig of a gemman vot comes from Ighgate."

Perceval lifted his brilliant eyes, and they were moistened with a heavenly dew, on the dull face of his fellow-creature. Beck made a scrape, looked round, shambled back to the door, and ran home, through the lamp-lit streets of the great mart of the Christian universe, to sew the gold in his mattress.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY TRAINING FOR AN UPRIGHT GENTLEMAN.

PERCIVAL ST. JOHN had been brought up at home under the eye of his mother and the care of an excellent man, who had been tutor to himself and his brothers. The tutor was not much of a classical scholar, for, in great measure, he had educated himself; and he who does so, usually lacks the polish and brilliancy of one whose footsteps have been led early to the Temple of the Muses. In fact, Captain Greville was a gallant soldier, with whom Vernon St. John had been acquainted in his own brief military career, and whom circumstances had so reduced in life as to compel him to sell his commission, and live as he could. He had always been known in his regiment as a reading man, and his authority looked up to in all the disputes as to history and dates, and literary anecdotes, which might occur at the mess-table. Vernon considered him the most learned man of his acquaintance; and, when accidentally meeting him in London, he learned his fallen fortunes, he congratulated himself on a very brilliant idea, when he suggested that Captain Greville should assist him in the education of his boys and the management of his estate. At first, all that Greville modestly undertook, with respect to the former, and, indeed, was expected to do, was to prepare the young gentleman for Eton, to which Vernon, with the natural predilection of an Eton man, destined his sons. But the sickly constitutions of the two elder justified Lady Mary in her question to a public school; and

Percival conceived early so strong an affection for a sailor's life, that the father's intentions were frustrated. The two elder continued their education at home; and Percival, at an earlier age than usual, went to sea. The last was fortunate enough to have for his captain one of that new race of naval officers who, well educated and accomplished, form a notable contrast to the old heroes of Smollet. Percival, however, had not been long in the service before the deaths of his two elder brothers, preceded by that of his father, made him the head of his ancient house, and the sole prop of his mother's earthly hopes. He conquered with a generous effort the passion for his noble profession, which service had but confirmed, and returned home with his fresh child-like nature uncorrupted, his constitution strengthened, his lively and impressionable mind braced by the experience of danger and the habits of duty, and quietly resumed his reading under Captain Greville, who had moved from the hall to a small house in the village.

Now, the education he had received, from first to last, was less adapted prematurely to quicken his intellect and excite his imagination than to warm his heart and elevate, while it chastened, his moral qualities; for in Lady Mary there was, amidst singular sweetness of temper, a high cast of character and thought. She was not what is commonly called clever, and her experience of the world was limited, compared to that of most women of similar rank who pass their

lives in the vast theatre of London. But she became superior by a certain single-heartedness which made truth so habitual to her, that the light in which she lived rendered all objects around her clear. One who is always true in the great duties of life, is nearly always wise. And Vernon, when he had fairly buried his faults, had felt a noble shame for the excesses into which they had led him. Gradually more and more wedded to his home, he dropped his old companions. He set grave guard on his talk (his *habits* now required no guard), lest any of the ancient levity should taint the ears of his children. Nothing is more common in parents than their desire that their children should escape their faults. We scarcely know ourselves till we have children, and then, if we love them duly, we look narrowly into failings that become vices, when they serve as examples to the young.

The inborn gentleman with the native courage, and spirit, and horror of trick and falsehood which belong to that chivalrous abstraction, survived almost alone in Vernon St. John; and his boys sprang up in the atmosphere of generous sentiments and transparent truth. The tutor was in harmony with the parents—a soldier every inch of him—not a mere disciplinarian, yet with a profound sense of duty and a knowledge that duty is to be found in attention to details. In inculcating the habit of subordination so graceful to the young, he knew how to make himself beloved, and what is harder still, to be understood. The soul of this poor soldier was white and unstained, as the arms of a maiden knight; it was full of suppressed, but lofty enthusiasm. He had been ill-used, whether by Fate or the Horse Guards—his career had been a failure, but he was as loyal as if his hand held the field-marshal's truncheon and the

garter bound his knee. He was above all querulous discontent. From him, no less than from his parents, Percival caught not only a spirit of honour worthy the *antiqua fides* of the poets, but that peculiar cleanliness of thought, if the expression may be used, which belongs to the ideal of youthful chivalry. In mere book-learning, Percival, as may be supposed, was not very extensively read; but his mind, if not largely stored, had a certain unity of culture which gave it stability and individualised its operations. Travels, voyages, narratives of heroic adventure, biographies of great men, had made the favourite pasture of his enthusiasm. To this was added the more stirring, and, perhaps, the more genuine order of poets who make you feel and glow, rather than doubt and ponder. He knew, at least, enough of Greek to enjoy old Homer; and if he could have come but ill through a college examination into Æschylus and Sophocles, he had dwelt with fresh delight on the rushing storm of spears, in the *Seven before Thebes*, and wept over the heroic calamities of *Antigone*. In science, he was no adept; but his clear, good sense, and quick appreciation of positive truths, had led him easily through the elementary mathematics, and his somewhat martial spirit had made him delight in the old captain's lectures on military tactics. Had he remained in the navy, Percival St. John would, doubtless, have been distinguished. His talents fitted him for straightforward manly action; and he had a generous desire of distinction, vague, perhaps, the moment he was taken from his profession, and curbed by his diffidence in himself and his sense of deficiencies in the ordinary routine of purely classical education. Still he had in him all the elements of a true man—a man to go through life with a firm step and a clear

conscience, and a gallant hope. Such a man may not win fame, *that* is an accident; but he must occupy no despicable place in the movement of the world.

It was at first intended to send Percival to Oxford, but for some reason or other, that design was abandoned. Perhaps Lady Mary, over-cautious, as mothers left alone sometimes are,—feared the contagion to which a young man of brilliant expectations, and no studious turn, is necessarily exposed in all places of miscellaneous resort.—So Percival was sent abroad for two years, under the guardianship of Captain Greville. On his return, at the age of nineteen—the great world lay before him, and he longed ardently to enter. For a year Lady Mary's fears and fond anxieties detained him at Laughton; but, though his great tenderness for his mother withheld Percival from opposing her wishes by his own, this interval of inaction affected visibly his health and spirits. Captain Greville, a man of the world, saw the cause sooner than Lady Mary, and one morning, earlier than usual, he walked up to the Hall.

The captain, with all his deference to the sex, was a plain man enough, when business was to be done. Like his great commander, he came to the point in a few words.

"My dear Lady Mary, our boy must go to London—we are killing him here."

"Mr. Greville!" cried Lady Mary, turning pale and putting aside her embroidery—"killing him?"

"Killing the man in him. I don't mean to alarm you—I dare say his lungs are sound enough, and that his heart would bear the sthenoscope to the satisfaction of the College of Surgeons. But, my dear ma'am, Percival is to be a man—it is the man you are killing by keeping him tied to your apron-string."

"Oh, Mr. Greville! I am sure you don't wish to wound me, but——"

"I beg ten thousand pardons. I am rough, but truth is rough sometimes."

"It is not for my sake," said the mother, warmly, and with tears in her eyes, "that I have wished him to be here. If he is dull, can we not fill the house for him?"

"Fill a thimble, my dear Lady Mary—Percival should have a plunge in the ocean."

"But he is so young yet, that horrid London!—such temptations—fatherless, too!"

"I have no fear of the result if Percival goes now while his principles are strong, and his imagination not inflamed; but if we keep him here much longer against his bent, he will learn to brood and to muse, write bad poetry perhaps, and think the world withheld from him a thousand times more delightful than it is. This very dread of temptation will provoke his curiosity, irritate his fancy, make him imagine the temptation must be a very delightful thing. For the first time in my life, ma'am, I have caught him sighing over fashionable novels, and subscribing to the Southampton Circulating Library. Take my word for it, it is time that Percival should begin life, and swim without corks."

Lady Mary had a profound confidence in Greville's judgment and affection for Percival, and like a sensible woman she was aware of her own weakness. She remained silent for a few moments, and then said, with an effort—

"You know how hateful London is to me now—how unfit I am to return to the hollow forms of its society; still, if you think it right, I will take a house for the season, and Percival can still be under our eye."

"No, ma'am, pardon me, that will be the surest way to make him either

discontented or hypocritical. A young man of his prospects and temper can hardly be expected to chime in with all our sober, old-fashioned habits. You will impose on him—if he is to conform to our hours, and notions, and quiet set—a thousand irksome restraints; and what will be the consequence? In a year, he will be of age, and can throw us off altogether, if he pleases. I know the boy:—don't seem to distrust him—he may be trusted. You place the true constraint on temptation, when you say to him, 'We confide to you our dearest treasure—your honour, your morals, your conscience, yourself!'"

"But, at least, you will go with him, if it must be so," said Lady Mary, after a few timid arguments, from which, one by one, she was driven.

"I!—what for?—to be a jest of the young puppies he must know—to make him ashamed of himself and me—himself as a milksop, and me as a dry nurse."

"But this was not so abroad!"

"Abroad, ma'am, I gave him full swing, I promise you; and when we went abroad, he was two years younger."

"But he is a mere child, still."

"Child, Lady Mary! At his age, I had gone through two sieges. There are younger faces than his at a mess-room. Come, come! I know what you fear—he may commit some follies; very likely. He may be taken in, and lose some money—he can afford it, and he will get experience in return. Vices he has none. I have seen him—ay, with the vicious. Send him out against the world, like a saint of old, with his Bible in his hand, and no spot on his robe. Let him see fairly what is, not stay here to dream of what is not. And when he's of age, ma'am, we must get him an object—a pursuit;—start him for the county, and make him serve the state; he

will understand that business pretty well. Tush! tush! what is there to cry at?"

The Captain prevailed. We don't say that his advice would have been equally judicious for all youths of Percival's age: but he knew well the nature to which he confided: he knew well how strong was that young heart in its healthful simplicity and instinctive rectitude; and he appreciated its manliness not too highly when he felt that all evident props and aids would be but irritating tokens of distrust.

And thus, armed only with letters of introduction, his mother's tearful admonitions, and Greville's experienced warnings, Percival St. John was launched into London life. After the first month or so, Greville came up to visit him, do him sundry kind invisible offices amongst his old friends, help him to equip his apartments, and mount his stud; and, wholly satisfied with the results of his experiment, returned in high spirits with flattering reports to the anxious mother.

But, indeed, the tone of Percival's letters would have been sufficient to allay even maternal anxiety. He did not write, as sons are too apt to do, short excuses for not writing more at length, unsatisfactory compressions of details (exciting worlds of conjecture), into a hurried sentence. Frank and overflowing, those delightful epistles gave accounts fresh from the first impressions of all he saw and did. There was a racy, wholesome gusto in his enjoyment of novelty and independence. His balls and his dinners, and his cricket at *Lord's*—his partners, and his companions; his general gaiety, his occasional *ennui*, furnished ample materials to one who felt he was corresponding with another heart, and had nothing to fear or to conceal.

But about two months before this

portion of our narrative opens with the coronation, Lady Mary's favourite sister, who had never married, and who, by the death of her parents, was left alone in the worse than widowhood of an old maid, had been ordered to Pisa, for a complaint that betrayed pulmonary symptoms; and Lady Mary, with her usual unselfishness, conquered both her aversion to movement and her wish to be in reach of her son, to accompany abroad this beloved and solitary relative. Captain Greville was pressed into service as their joint cavalier. And thus Percival's habitual intercourse with his two principal correspondents received a temporary check.

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN ARDWORTH.

At noon the next day, Beck, restored to his grandeur, was at the helm of his state; Percival was vainly trying to be amused by the talk of two or three loungers who did him the honour to smoke a cigar in his rooms; and John Ardworth sat in his dingy cell in Gray's Inn, with a pile of law books on the table, and the daily newspapers carpeting a footstool of *Hansard's Debates* upon the floor—no unusual combination of studies amongst the poorer and more ardent students of the law, who often owe their earliest, nor perhaps their least noble earnings, to employment in the empire of the Press. By the power of a mind habituated to labour, and backed by a frame of remarkable strength and endurance, Ardworth grappled with his arid studies not the less manfully for a night mainly spent in a printer's office, and stinted to less than four hours' actual sleep. But that sleep was profound and refreshing as a peasant's. The nights thus devoted to the Press (he was employed in the sub-editing of a daily journal), the mornings to the law, he kept distinct the two separate callings with a stern subdivision of labour, which in itself proved the vigour of his energy and the resolution of his will. Early compelled to shift for himself, and carve out his own way, he had obtained a small fellowship at the small college in which he had passed his academic career. Previous to his arrival in London, by contributions to political periodicals, and a high reputation at that noble debating society in Cambridge which has

trained some of the most eminent of living public men,* he had established a name which was immediately useful to him in obtaining employment on the Press. Like most young men of practical ability, he was an eager politician. The popular passion of the day kindled his enthusiasm, and stirred the depths of his soul with magnificent, though exaggerated, hopes in the destiny of his race. He identified himself with the people, his stout heart beat loud in their stormy cause. His compositions, in which they wanted that knowledge of men, that subtle comprehension of the true state of parties, that happy *temperance* in which the crowning wisdom of statesmen must consist—qualities which experience alone can give—excited considerable attention by their bold eloquence and hardy logic. They were suited to the time. But John Ardworth had that solidity of understanding which betokens more than talent, and which is the usual substratum of genius. He would not depend alone on the precarious and often unhonoured toils of polemical literature for that distinction on which he had fixed his steadfast heart.

* Amongst those whom the "Union" almost contemporaneously prepared for public life, and whose distinction has kept the promise of their youth, we may mention the eminent barristers, Messrs Austin and Cockburn; and amongst statesmen, Lord Grey, Mr. C. Buller, Mr. Charles Villiers, and Mr. Macaulay. Nor ought we to forget those brilliant competitors for the prizes of the University, Dr. Kennedy (now headmaster of Shrewsbury School) and the late Wintthrop M. Praed.

Patiently he plodded on through the formal drudgeries of his new profession, lighting up dulness by his own acute comprehension, weaving complexities into simple system by the grasp of an intellect inured to generalise; and learning to love even what was most distasteful, by the sense of difficulty overcome, and the clearer vision which every step through the mists, and up the hill, gave of the land beyond. Of what the superficial are apt to consider genius, John Ardworth had but little. He had some imagination (for a true thinker is never without that), but he had a very slight share of fancy. He did not flirt with the Muses; on the granite of his mind, few flowers could spring. His style rushing and earnest, admitted at times of a humour not without delicacy—though less delicate than forcible and deep—but it was little adorned with wit, and still less with poetry. Yet Ardworth had genius, and genius ample and magnificent. There was genius in that industrious energy so patient in the conquest of detail, so triumphant in the perception of results. There was genius in that kindly sympathy with mankind—genius in that stubborn determination to succeed—genius in that vivid comprehension of affairs, and the large interests of the world—genius fed in the labours of the closet, and evinced the instant he was brought in contact with men; evinced in readiness of thought, grasp of memory, even in a rough imperious manner, which showed him born to speak strong truths, and in their name to struggle and command.

Rough was this man often in his exterior, though really gentle and kind-hearted. John Ardworth had sacrificed to no Graces: he would have thrown Lord Chesterfield into a fever. Not that he was ever vulgar, for vulgarity implies affectation of refinement, but he talked loud and

laughed loud if the whim seized him, and rubbed his great hands with a boyish heartiness of glee, if he discomfited an adversary in argument. Or, sometimes he would sit abstracted and moody, and answer briefly and boorishly those who interrupted him. Young men were mostly afraid of him, though he wanted but fame to have a set of admiring disciples. Old men censured his presumption, and recoiled from the novelty of his ideas. Women alone liked and appreciated him, as, with their finer insight into character, they generally do, what is honest and sterling. Some strange failings, too, had John Ardworth—some of the usual vagaries and contradictions of clever men. As a system, he was rigidly abstemious. For days together he would drink nothing but water, eat nothing but bread, or hard biscuit, or a couple of eggs: then having wound up some allotted portion of work, Ardworth would indulge what he called a self-saturnalia—would stride off with old college friends to an inn in one of the suburbs, and spend, as he said triumphantly, ‘a day of blessed debauch!’ Innocent enough, for the most part, the debauch was;—consisting in cracking jests, stringing puns, a fish dinner, perhaps, and an extra bottle or two of fiery port. Sometimes this jollity, which was always loud and uproarious, found its scene in one of the cider cellars or midnight taverns, but Ardworth’s labours on the Press made that latter dissipation extremely rare. These relaxations were always succeeded by a mien more than usually grave, a manner more than usually curt and ungracious, an application more than ever rigorous and intense. John Ardworth was not a good-tempered man, but he was the best-natured man that ever breathed. He was like all ambitious persons, very much occupied with self, and yet it would have been a ludicrous misappli-

cation of words to call him selfish. Even the desire of fame which absorbed him was but a part of benevolence—a desire to promote justice and to serve his kind.

John Ardworth's shaggy brows were bent over his open volumes, when his clerk entered noiselessly, and placed on his table a letter which the twopenny postman had just delivered. With an impatient shrug of the shoulders, Ardworth glanced towards the superscription, but his eye became earnest and his interest aroused, as he recognised the hand. "Again!" he muttered, "what mystery is this? Who can feel such interest in my fate?" He broke the seal, and read as follows:—

"Do you neglect my advice, or have you begun to act upon it? Are you contented only with the slow process of mechanical application, or will you make a triumphant effort to abridge your apprenticeship, and emerge at once into fame and power? I repeat that you fritter away your talents and your opportunities upon this miserable task-work on a journal. I am impatient for you. Come forward yourself, put your force and your knowledge into some work of which the world may know the author. Day after day, I am examining into your destiny, and day after day I believe more and more that you are not fated for the tedious drudgery to which you doom your youth. I would have you great, but in the senate, not a wretched casuist at the bar. Appear in public as an individual authority, not one of that nameless troop of shadows, contemned while dreaded as the Press. Write for renown. Go into the world, and make friends. Soften your rugged bearing. Lift yourself above that herd whom you call the *people*. What if you are born of the noble class? What if your career is as Gentleman not Plebeian? Want not for money. Use what I

send you, as the young and the well-born should use it; or let it, at least, gain you a respite from toils for bread—and support you in your struggle to emancipate yourself from obscurity into fame.

"YOUR UNKNOWN FRIEND."

A bank-note for 100*l.* dropped from the envelope, as Ardworth silently replaced the letter on the table.

Thrice before had he received communications in the same handwriting, and much to the same effect. Certainly, to a mind of less strength, there would have been something very unsettling in those vague hints of a station higher than he owned—of a future at variance with the toilsome lot he had drawn from the urn; but after a single glance over his lone position in all its bearings, and probable expectations, Ardworth's steady sense shook off the slight disturbance such misty vaticinations had effected. His mother's family was indeed unknown to him—he was even ignorant of her maiden name. But that very obscurity seemed unfavourable to much hope from such a quarter. The connexions with the rich and well-born are seldom left obscure. From his father's family he had not one expectation. More had he been moved by exhortations now generally repeated, but in a previous letter more precisely detailed—*viz.*, to appeal to the reading public in his acknowledged person, and by some striking and original work. This idea he had often contemplated and revolved; but partly the necessity of keeping pace with the many exigencies of the hour, had deterred him, and partly also the conviction of his sober judgment, that a man does himself no good at the bar, even by the most brilliant distinction gained in discursive fields. He had the natural yearning of the Restless Genius; and the Patient Genius

(higher power of the two) had suppressed the longing. Still, so far, the whispers of his correspondent tempted and aroused. But hitherto he had sought to persuade himself that the communications thus strangely forced on him, arose, perhaps, from idle motives—a jest, it might be, of one of his old college friends, or at best the vain enthusiasm of some more credulous admirer. But the enclosure now sent to him, forbade either of these suppositions. Who that he knew could afford so costly a jest, or so extravagant a tribute? He was perplexed, and with his perplexity was mixed a kind of fear. Plain, earnest, unromantic in the common acceptation of the word, the mystery of this intermeddling with his fate, this arrogation of the licence to spy, the right to counsel, and the privilege to bestow, gave him the uneasiness the bravest men may feel at noises in the dark. That day he could apply no more—he could not settle back to his Law Reports. He took two or three unquiet turns up and down his smoke-dried cell, then locked up the letter and enclosure, seized his hat, and strode, with his usual lusty swinging strides, into the open air.

But still the letter haunted him. “And if,” he said, almost audibly, “if I were the heir to some higher station, why then I might have a heart like idle men; and Helen—beloved Helen!”—he paused, sighed, shook his rough head, shaggy with neglected curls, and added—“As if even then I could steal myself into a girl’s good graces! Man’s esteem I may command, though poor—woman’s love could I win, though rich! Pooh! pooh! every wood does not make a Mercury; and faith, the wood I am made of, will scarcely cut up into a lover.”

Nevertheless, though thus soliloquising, Ardworth mechanically bent

his way towards Brompton, and halted, half ashamed of himself, at the house where Helen lodged with her aunt. It was a building that stood apart from all the cottages and villas of that charming suburb, half way down a narrow lane, and enclosed by high melancholy walls, deep set in which a small door, with the paint blistered and weather-stained, gave unfrequented entrance to the demesne. A woman servant of middle age, and starched puritanical appearance, answered the loud ring of the bell, and Ardworth seemed a privileged visitor, for she asked him no question, as with a slight nod, and a smileless stupid expression in a face otherwise comely, she led the way across a paved path, much weed-grown, to the house. That house itself had somewhat of a stern and sad exterior. It was not ancient, yet it looked old from shabbiness and neglect. The vine, loosened from the rusty nails, trailed rankly against the wall, and fell in crawling branches over the ground. The house had once been white-washed, but the colour, worn off in great patches, distained with damp, struggled here and there with the dingy chipped bricks beneath. There was no peculiar want of what is called ‘tenantable repair;’ the windows were whole, and doubtless the roof sheltered from the rain. But the wood-work that encased the panes was decayed, and house-leek covered the tiles. Altogether there was that forlorn and cheerless aspect about the place, which chills the visitor, he defines not why. And Ardworth steadied his usual careless step, and crept, as if timidly, up the creaking stairs.

On entering the drawing-room—it seemed at first deserted; but the eye searching round, perceived something stir in the recess of a huge chair—set by the fireless hearth. And from amidst a mass of coverings a pale

face emerged, and a thin hand waved its welcome to the visitor.

Ardworth approached, pressed the hand, and drew a seat near to the sufferer's.

"You are better, I hope?" he said cordially,—and yet in a tone of more respect than was often perceptible in his deep blunt voice.

"I am always the same," was the quiet answer; "come nearer still. Your visits cheer me."

And as these last words were said, Madame Dalibard raised herself from her recumbent posture, and gazed long upon Ardworth's face of power and front of thought. "You over-fatigue yourself, my poor kinsman," she said, with a certain tenderness; "you look already too old for your young years."

"That's no disadvantage at the bar."

"Is the bar your means, or your end?"

"My dear Madame Dalibard, it is my profession."

"No, your profession is to rise. John Ardworth," and the low voice swelled in its volume. "You are bold, able, and aspiring—for this, I love you—love you almost—almost as a mother. Your fate," she continued, hurriedly, "interests me; your energies inspire me with admiration. Often I sit here for hours, musing over your destiny to be—so that at times, I may almost say that in your life I live."

Ardworth looked embarrassed, and with an awkward attempt at compliment, he began hesitatingly: "I should think too highly of myself, if I could really believe that you——"

"Tell me," interrupted Madame Dalibard: "we have had many conversations upon grave and subtle matters; we have disputed on the secret mysteries of the human mind; we have compared our several experiences of outward life and the

mechanism of the social world,—tell me then, and frankly, what do you think of me? Do you regard me merely as your sex is apt to regard the woman, who aspires to equal men—a thing of borrowed phrases and unsound ideas—feeble to guide and unskilled to teach? or do you recognise in this miserable body a mind of force not unworthy yours, ruled by an experience larger than your own?"

"I think of you," answered Ardworth, frankly, "as the most remarkable woman I have ever met. Yet, do not be angry, I do not like to yield to the influence which you gain over me when we meet. It disturbs my convictions—it disquiets my reason—I do not settle back to my life so easily after your breath has passed over it."

"And yet," said Lucretia, with a solemn sadness in her voice, "that influence is but the natural power which cold maturity exercises on ardent youth. It is my mournful advantage over you, that disquiets your happy calm. It is my experience that unsettles the fallacies which you name 'convictions.' Let this pass. I asked your opinion of me, because I wished to place at your service all that knowledge of life which I possess. In proportion as you esteem me, you will accept or reject my counsels."

"I have benefited by them already. It is the tone that you advised me to assume, that gave me an importance I had not before, with that old formalist whose paper I serve, and whose prejudices I shock; it is to your criticisms that I owe the more practical turn of my writings, and the greater hold they have taken on the public."

"Trifles indeed, these," said Madame Dalibard, with a half smile. "Let them at least induce you to listen to me; if I propose to make your path

more pleasant, yet your ascent more rapid."

Ardworth knit his brows, and his countenance assumed an expression of doubt and curiosity. However, he only replied, with a blunt laugh—

"You must be wise, indeed, if you have discovered a royal road to distinction!"

"Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple
shines afar!"

A more sensible exclamation than poets usually preface with their whining 'Ah's' and 'Oh's!'"

"What we *are* is nothing," pursued Madame Dalibard; "what we *seem* is much."

Ardworth thrust his hands into his pockets, and shook his head. The wise woman continued, unheeding his dissent from her premises.

"Everything you are taught to value has a likeness, and it is that likeness which the world values. Take a man out of the streets, poor and ragged, what will the world do with him? Send him to the work-house, if not to the jail. Ask a great painter to take that man's portrait, rags, squalor, and all; and kings will bid for the picture. You would thrust the man from your doors, you would place the portrait in your palaces. It is the same with qualities, the portrait is worth more than the truth. What is virtue without character? But a man without virtue may thrive on a character! What is genius without success? But how often you bow to success without genius! John Ardworth, possess yourself of the portraits—win the character—seize the success."

"Madam," exclaimed Ardworth, rudely, "this is horrible!"

"Horrible, it may be," said Madame Dalibard, gently, and feeling, perhaps, that she had gone too far: "but it is the world's judgment.

Seem, then, as well as *be*. You have virtue, as I believe. Well, wrap yourself in it—in your closet. Go into the world, and earn character. If you have genius, let it comfort you. Rush into the crowd, and get success."

"Stop!" cried Ardworth; "I recognise you. How could I be so blind? It is you who have written to me, and in the same strain: you have robbed yourself—you, poor sufferer, to throw extravagance into these strong hands. And why? What am I to you?"

An expression of actual fondness softened Lucretia's face, as she looked up at him, and replied; "I will tell you hereafter what you are to me. First, I confess that it is I whose letters have perplexed, perhaps offended you. The sum that I sent, I do not miss. I have more—will ever have more at your command—never fear. Yes, I wish you to go into the world, not as a dependent, but as an equal to the world's favourites. I wish you to know more of men than mere law-books teach you. I wish you to be in men's mouths, create a circle that shall talk of young Ardworth—that talk would travel to those who can advance your career. The very possession of money in certain stages of life gives assurance to the manner, gives attraction to the address."

"But," said Ardworth, "all this is very well for some favourite of birth and fortune; but for me—yet speak, and plainly; you throw out hints that I am what I know not; but something less dependent on his nerves and his brain, than is plain John Ardworth. What is it you mean?"

Madame Dalibard bent her face over her breast, and rocking herself in her chair, seemed to muse for some moments before she answered.

"When I first came to England,

some months ago, I desired naturally to learn all the particulars of my family and kindred, from which my long residence abroad had estranged me. John Walter Ardworth was related to my half-sister, to me he was but a mere connexion. However, I knew something of his history, yet I did not know that he *had* a son. Shortly before I came to England, I learned that one who *passed* for his son had been brought up by Mr. Fielden, and from Mr. Fielden I have since learned all the grounds for that belief, from which you take the name of Ardworth."

Lucretia paused a moment; and after a glance at the impatient, wondering, and eager countenance that bent intent upon her, she resumed:

"Your reputed father was, you are doubtless aware, of reckless and extravagant habits. He had been put into the army by my uncle, and he entered that profession with the careless buoyancy of his sanguine nature. I remember those days—that day! Well, to return—where was I?—Walter Ardworth had the folly to entertain strong notions of politics. He dreamt of being a soldier, and yet persuaded himself to be a republican. His notions, so hateful in his profession, got wind: he disguised nothing, he neglected the portraits of things—*Appearances*. He excited the rancour of his commanding officer—for politics then, more even than now, were implacable ministrants to hate—occasion presented itself: during the short Peace of Amiens he had been recalled. He had to head a detachment of soldiers against some mob, in Ireland, I believe; he did not fire on the mob according to orders—so, at least, it was said: John Walter Ardworth was tried by a court-martial, and broke! But you know all this, perhaps!"

"My poor father! Only in part: I knew that he had been dismissed

the army—I believed unjustly. He was a soldier, and yet he dared to think for himself, and be humane!"

"But my uncle had left him a legacy—it brought no blessing—none of that old man's gold did. Where are they all now? Dalibard, Susan, and her fair-faced husband, Where? Vernon is in his grave—but one son of many left! Gabriel Varney lives, it is true!—and I! But that gold—yea, in our hands, there was a curse on it! Walter Ardworth had his legacy—his nature was gay: if disgraced in his profession, he found men to pity and praise him—Fools of Party like himself. He lived joyously—drank or gamed, or lent or borrowed—what matters the wherefore?—he was in debt—he lived at last a wretched, shifting, fugitive life—snatching bread where he could—with the bailiffs at his heels—then, for a short time, we met again."

Lucretia's brow grew black as night, as her voice dropped at that last sentence, and it was with a start that she continued.

"In the midst of this hunted existence, Walter Ardworth appeared, late one night, at Mr. Fielden's with an infant. He seemed, so says Mr. Fielden, ill, worn, and haggard. He entered into no explanations with respect to the child that accompanied him, and retired at once to rest. What follows, Mr. Fielden, at my request, has noted down. Read, and see what claim you have to the honourable parentage so vaguely ascribed to you."

As she spoke, Madame Dalibard opened a box on her table, drew forth a paper in Fielden's writing, and placed it in Ardworth's hand. After some preliminary statement of the writer's intimacy with the elder Ardworth, and the appearance of the latter at his house, as related by Madame Dalibard, &c., the document went on thus:—

"The next day, when my poor guest was still in bed, my servant Hannah came to advise me that two persons were without, waiting to see me. As is my wont, I bade them be shown in. On their entrance, (two rough farmer-looking men they were, whom I thought might be coming to hire my little pasture field,) I prayed them to speak low, as a sick gentleman was just over head. Whereupon, and without saying a word further, the two strangers made a rush from the room, leaving me dumb with amazement; in a few moments, I heard voices and a scuffle above. I recovered myself, and thinking robbers had entered my peaceful house, I called out lustily, when Hannah came in, and we both, taking courage, went up stairs, and found that poor Walter was in the hands of these supposed robbers, who in truth were but bailiffs. They would not trust him out of their sight for a moment. However, he took it more pleasantly than I could have supposed possible; prayed me in a whisper to take care of the child, and I should soon hear from him again. In less than an hour, he was gone. Two days afterwards, I received from him a hurried letter, without address, of which this is the copy:—

"DEAR FRIEND,—I slipt from the bailiffs, and here I am in a safe little tavern in sight of the sea! Mother Country is a very bad parent to me! Mother Brownrigg herself could scarcely be worse. I shall work out my passage to some foreign land, and if I can recover my health (sea-air is bracing!) I don't despair of getting my bread honestly, somehow. If ever I can pay my debts I may return. But, meanwhile, my good old tutor, what will you think of me? You to whom my sole return for so much pains taken in vain, is another mouth to feed! And no money to pay for

the board! Yet you'll not grudge the child a place at your table, will you? No, nor kind, saving Mrs. Fielden either—God bless her tender, economical soul! You know quite enough of me to be sure that I shall very soon either free you of the boy, or send you something, to prevent its being an incumbrance. I would say, love and pity the child for my sake. But I own I feel—— By Jove, I must be off—I hear the first signal from the vessel, that—Yours in haste.
"J. W. A."

Young Ardworth stopped from the lecture, and sighed heavily. There seemed to him, in this letter, worse than a mock gaiety;—a certain levity and recklessness—which jarred on his own high principles. And the want of affection for the child thus abandoned was evident—not one fond word. He resumed the statement with a gloomy and disheartened attention.

"This was all I heard from poor erring Walter for more than three years, but I knew, in spite of his follies, that his heart was sound at bottom," (the son's eye brightened here, and he kissed the paper,) "and the child was no burthen to us—we loved it, not only for Ardworth's sake, but for its own, and for charity's, and Christ's. Ardworth's second letter was as follows:—

"*En iterum Crispinus!*—I am still alive, and getting on in the world—ay, and honestly too—I am no longer spending heedlessly; I am saving for my debts, and I shall live, I trust, to pay off every farthing. First, for my debt to you—I send an order not signed in my name, but equally valid, on Messrs. Drummond, for 250*l.* Repay yourself what the boy has cost. Let him be educated to get his own living—if clever, as a scholar or a lawyer—if dull, as a

tradesman. Whatever I may gain, he will have his own way to make. I ought to tell you the story connected with his birth, but it is one of pain and shame; and on reflection, I feel that I have no right to injure him by affixing to his early birth an opprobrium of which he himself is guiltless. If ever I return to England, you shall know all, and by your counsels I will abide. Love to all your happy family—Your grateful Friend and Pupil.

“From this letter I began to suspect that the poor boy was probably not born in wedlock, and that Ardworth’s silence arose from his compunction. I conceived it best never to mention this suspicion to John himself as he grew up. Why should I afflict him by a doubt from which his father shrunk, and which might only exist in my own inexperienced and uncharitable interpretation of some vague words? When John was fourteen, I received from Messrs. Drummond a farther sum of 500*l.*, but without any line from Ardworth, and only to the effect that Messrs. Drummond were directed by a correspondent in Calcutta to pay me the said sum on behalf of expenses incurred for the maintenance of the child left to my charge by John Walter Ardworth. My young pupil had been two years at the university, when I received the letter of which this is a copy:—

“‘How are you?—still well—still happy!—let me hope so! I have not written to you, dear old friend, but I have not been forgetful of you—I have inquired of you through my correspondents, and have learned, from time to time, such accounts as satisfied my grateful affection for you. I find that you have given the boy my name? Well, let him bear it—it is nothing to boast of, such as it

became in my person; but, mind, I do not, therefore, acknowledge him as *my* son. I wish him to think himself without parents, without other aid in the career of life than his own industry and talent,—if talent he has. Let him go through the healthful probation of toil—let him search for and find independence. Till he is of age, 150*l.* per annum will be paid quarterly to your account for him at Messrs. Drummonds’. If then, to set him up in any business or profession, a sum of money be necessary, name the amount by a line, signed A.B., Calcutta, to the care of Messrs. Drummond, and it will reach, and find me disposed to follow your instructions. But after that time all further supply from me will cease. Do not suppose, because I send this from India, that I am laden with rupees; all I can hope to attain is a competence. That boy is not the only one who has claims to share it. Even, therefore, if I had the wish to rear him to the extravagant habits that ruined myself, I have not the power. Yes!—let him lean on his own strength. In the letter you send me, write fully of your family, your sons, and write as to a man who can perhaps help them in the world, and will be too happy thus in some slight degree to repay all he owes you. You would smile approvingly if you saw me now—a steady, money-getting man, but still yours as ever.

“‘P.S.—Do not let the boy write to me, nor give him this clue to my address.’

“On the receipt of this letter, I wrote fully to Ardworth about the excellent promise and conduct of his poor neglected son. I told him truly he was a son any father might be proud of, and rebuked, even to harshness, Walter’s unseemly tone respecting him. One’s child is one’s child, however the father may have wronged

the mother. To this letter I never received any answer. When John was of age, and had made himself independent of want, by obtaining a college fellowship, I spoke to him about his prospects. I told him that his father, though residing abroad and for some reasons keeping himself concealed, had munificently paid hitherto for his maintenance, and would lay down what might be necessary to start him in business, or perhaps place him in the army; but that his father might be better pleased if he could show a love of independence, and henceforth maintain himself. I knew the boy I spoke to—John thought as I did, and I never applied for another donation to the elder Ardworth. The allowance ceased: John since then has maintained himself. I have heard no more from his father, though I have written often to the address he gave me. I begin to fear that he is dead. I once went up to town and saw one of the heads of Messrs. Drummonds' firm—a very polite gentleman, but he could give me no information, except that he obeyed instructions from a correspondent at Calcutta—one Mr. Macfarren. Whereon I wrote to Mr Macfarren, and asked him, as I thought very pressing, to tell me all he knew of poor Ardworth the elder. He answered shortly, that he knew of no such person at all, and that A.B. was a French merchant, settled in Calcutta, who had been dead for above two years. I now gave up all hopes of any further intelligence, and was more convinced than ever that I had acted rightly in withholding from poor John my correspondence with his father. The lad had been curious and inquisitive naturally, but when I told him that I thought it my duty to his father to be so reserved, he forbore to press me. I have only to add, first, that by all the inquiries I could make of the surviving

members of Walter Ardworth's family, it seemed their full belief that he had never been married, and therefore I fear we must conclude that he had no legitimate children, which may account for, though it cannot excuse, his neglect; and secondly, with respect to the sums received on dear John's account—I put them all by, capital and interest, deducting only the expense of his first year at Cambridge, (the which I could not defray, without injuring my own children,) and it all stands in his name at Messrs. Drummonds', vested in the Three Per Cents. That I have not told him of this was by my poor dear wife's advice; for she said, very sensibly, and she was a shrewd woman on money matters, 'If he knows he has such a large sum all in the lump, who knows but he may grow idle and extravagant, and spend it at once, like his father before him; whereas, some time or other, he will want to marry, or need money for some particular purpose,—then what a blessing it will be!'

"However, my dear madam, as you know the world better than I do, you can now do as you please, both as to communicating to John all the information herein contained as to his parentage, and as to apprising him of the large sum of which he is lawfully possessed.—MATHEW FIELDEN.

"P.S.—In justice to poor John Ardworth, and to show that whatever whim he may have conceived about his own child, he had still a heart kind enough to remember mine, though Heaven knows I said nothing about them in my letters, my eldest boy received an offer of an excellent place in a West India merchant's house, and has got on to be chief clerk, and my second son was presented to a living of one hundred and seventeen pounds a year, by a gentleman he never heard of. Though I never traced these good acts to

Ardworth, from whom else could they come?"

Ardworth put down the paper without a word; and Lucretia, who had watched him while he read, was struck with the self-control he evinced when he came to the end of the disclosure. She laid her hand on his, and said,

"Courage!—you have lost nothing!"

"Nothing!" said Ardworth, with a bitter smile. "A father's love and a father's name—nothing!"

"But," exclaimed Lucretia, "is this man your father? Does a father's heart beat in one line of those hard sentences. No, no; it seems to me probable—it seems to me almost certain, that you are—" she stopped, and continued with a calmer accent, "near to my own blood. I am now in England—in London—to prosecute the inquiry built upon that hope. If so—if so—you shall—" Madame Dalibard again stopped abruptly, and there was something terrible in the very exultation of her countenance. She drew a long breath, and resumed, with an evident effort at self command—"If so, I have a right to the interest I feel for you. Suffer me yet to be silent as to the grounds of my belief, and—and—love me a little in the meanwhile!"

Her voice trembled, as if with rushing tears, at these last words, and there was almost an agony in the tone in which they were said, and in the gesture of the clasped hands she held out to him.

Much moved (amidst all his mingled emotions at the tale thus made known to him) by the manner and voice of the narrator, Ardworth bent down and kissed the extended hands. Then he rose abruptly, walked to and fro the room, muttering to himself—paused opposite the window—threw it open, as for air, and, indeed, fairly gasped for breath. When he turned

round, however, his face was composed, and folding his arms on his large breast with a sudden action, he said aloud, and yet rather to himself than to his listener,—

"What matter, after all, by what name men call our fathers! We ourselves make our own fate! Bastard or noble, not a jot care I. Give me ancestors, I will not disgrace them; raze from my lot even the very name of father, and my sons shall have an ancestor in me!"

As he thus spoke, there was a rough grandeur in his hard face and the strong ease of his powerful form. And while thus standing and thus looking, the door opened, and Varney walked in abruptly.

These two men had met occasionally at Madame Dalibard's, but no intimacy had been established between them. Varney was formal and distant to Ardworth, and Ardworth felt a repugnance to Varney. With the instinct of sound, sterling, weighty natures, he detected at once, and disliked heartily, that something of gaudy, false, exaggerated, and hollow, which pervaded Gabriel Varney's talk and manner—even the trick of his walk, and the cut of his dress. And Ardworth wanted that boyish and beautiful luxuriance of character which belonged to Percival St. John, easy to please and to be pleased, and expanding into the warmth of admiration for all talent and all distinction. For art, if not the highest, Ardworth cared not a straw: it was nothing to him that Varney painted and composed, and ran showily through the jargon of literary babble, or toyed with the puzzles of unsatisfying metaphysics. He saw but a charlatan, and he had not yet learned from experience what strength and what danger lie hid in the boa parading its colours in the sun, and shifting, in the sensual sportiveness of its being, from bough to bough.

Varney halted in the middle of the room, as his eye rested first on Ardworth, and then glanced towards Madame Dalibard. But Ardworth, jarred from his reverie or resolves by the sound of a voice discordant to his ear at all times, especially in the mood which then possessed him, scarcely returned Varney's salutation, buttoned his coat over his chest, seized his hat, and upsetting two chairs, and very considerably disturbing the gravity of a round table, forced his way to Madame Dalibard, pressed her hand, and said in a whisper, "I shall see you again soon," and vanished.

Varney, smoothing his hair with fingers that shone with rings, slid into the seat next Madame Dalibard, which Ardworth had lately occupied, and said, "If I were a Clytemnestra, I should dread an Orestes in such a son!"

Madame Dalibard shot towards the speaker one of the sidelong suspicious glances which of old had characterised Lucretia, and said,

"Clytemnestra was happy! The Furies slept to her crime, and haunted but the avenger."

"Hist!" said Varney.

The door opened, and Ardworth reappeared.

"I quite forgot, what I half came to know.—How is Helen? Did she return home safe?"

"Safe—yes!"

"Dear girl—I am glad to hear it! Where is she? Not gone to those Mivers' again! I am no aristocrat, but why should one couple together refinement and vulgarity?"

"Mr. Ardworth," said Madame Dalibard, with haughty coldness, "my niece is under my care, and you will permit me to judge for myself how to discharge the trust. Mr. Mivers is her own relation—a nearer one than you are."

Not at all abashed by the rebuke,

Ardworth said carelessly, "Well, I shall talk to you again on that subject. Meanwhile, pray give my love to her—Helen, I mean."

Madame Dalibard half rose in her chair, then sunk back again, motioning with her hand to Ardworth to approach. Varney rose and walked to the window, as if sensible that something was about to be said not meant for his ear.

When Ardworth was close to her chair, Madame Dalibard grasped his hand with a vigour that surprised him, and drawing him nearer still, whispered as he bent down—

"I will give Helen your love, if it is a cousin's—or, if you will, a brother's love. Do you intend—do you feel—another, a warmer love? Speak, sir!" and drawing suddenly back, she gazed on his face, with a stern and menacing expression, her teeth set, and the lips firmly pressed together.

Ardworth, though a little startled, and half angry, answered with the low ironical laugh, not uncommon to him, "Pish! you ladies are apt to think us men much greater fools than we are. A briefless lawyer is not very inflammable tinder. Yes, a cousin's love—quite enough. Poor little Helen! time enough to put other notions into her head; and then—she will have a sweetheart, gay and handsome like herself!"

"Ay," said Madame Dalibard, with a slight smile, "ay, I am satisfied. Come soon."

Ardworth nodded, and hurried down the stairs. As he gained the door, he caught sight of Helen at a distance, bending over a flower-bed in the neglected garden. He paused, irresolute, a moment. "No," he muttered to himself; "no, I am fit company only for myself! A long walk into the fields, and then—away with these mists round the Past and Future; the Present at least is mine!"

CHAPTER V.

THE WEAVERS AND THE WOOF.

"And what," said Varney—"what, while we are pursuing a fancied clue, and seeking to provide first a name, and then a fortune for this young lawyer—what steps have you really taken to meet the danger that menaces *me*—to secure, if our inquiries fail, an independence for yourself? Months have elapsed, and you have still shrunk from advancing the great scheme upon which we built, when the daughter of Susan Mainwaring was admitted to your hearth."

"Why recall me, in these rare moments when I feel myself human still—why recall me back to the nethermost abyss of revenge and crime? Oh! let me be sure that I have still a son! Even if John Ardworth, with his gifts and energies, be denied to me!—a son, though in rags, I will give him wealth!—a son, though ignorant as the merest boor, I will pour into his brain my dark wisdom!—a son—a son!—my heart swells at the word. Ah, you sneer! Yes, my heart swells, but not with the mawkish fondness of a feeble mother. In a son, I shall live again—transmigrate from this tortured and horrible life of mine—drink back my youth. In him I shall rise from my fall—strong in his power—great in his grandeur. It is because I was born a woman—had woman's poor passions, and infirm weakness that I am what I am—I would transfer myself into the soul of man—man who has the strength to act, and the privilege to rise. Into the bronze of man's nature I would pour the experience which has broken, with its fierce elements,

the puny vessel of clay. Yes, Gabriel, in return for all I have done and sacrificed for you, I ask but co-operation in that one hope of my shattered and storm-beat being. Bear—bear—await—risk not that hope by some wretched peddling crime, which will bring on us both detection—some wanton revelry in guilt, which is not worth the terror that treads upon its heels."

"You forget," answered Varney, with a kind of submissive sullenness, for whatever had passed between these two persons in their secret and fearful intimacy, there was still a power in Lucretia, surviving her fall amidst the fiends, that impressed Varney with the only respect he felt for man or woman—"you forget strangely the nature of our elaborate and master project, when you speak of '*peddling crime*,' or '*wanton revelry*' in guilt! You forget, too, how every hour that we waste, deepens the peril that surrounds me, and may sweep from your side the sole companion that can aid you in your objects—nay, without whom, they must wholly fail. Let me speak first of that most urgent danger, for your memory seems short and troubled, since you have learned only to hope the recovery of your son. If this man, Stubmore, in whom the trust created by my uncle's will is now vested—once comes to town—once begins to bustle about his accursed projects of transferring the money from the Bank of England, I tell you again and again that my forgery on the bank will be detected, and that

transportation will be the smallest penalty inflicted; part of the forgery, as you know, was committed on your behalf, to find the monies necessary for the research for your son—committed on the clear understanding, that our project on Helen should repay me—should enable me, perhaps undetected, to restore the sums illegally abstracted, or, at the worst to confess to Stubmore, whose character I well know—that oppressed by difficulties, I had yielded to temptation—that I had forged his name (as I had forged his father's) as an authority to sell the capital from the bank, and that now, in replacing the money, I repaid my error, and threw myself on his indulgence—on his silence. I say, that I know enough of the man to know, that I should be thus cheaply saved, or at the worst, I should have but to strengthen his compassion by a bribe to his avarice. But if I cannot replace the money, I am lost."

"Well, well," said Lucretia, "the money you shall have, let me but find my son, and——"

"Grant me patience!" cried Varney, impetuously; "but what can your son do, if found, unless you endow him with the heritage of Laughton? To do that, Helen, who comes next to Percival St. John, in the course of the entail, must cease to live! Have I not aided—am I not aiding you hourly, in your grand objects? This evening I shall see a man whom I have long lost sight of, but who has acquired in a lawyer's life the true scent after evidence;—if that evidence exist, it shall be found. I have just learned his address. By to-morrow he shall be on the track. I have stinted myself to save from the results of the last forgery the gold to whet his zeal. For the rest, as I have said, your design involves the removal of two lives. Already, over the one more difficult to slay, the shadow creeps and the pall hangs. I have

won, as you wished and as was necessary, young St. John's familiar acquaintance; when the hour comes, he is in my hands."

Lucretia smiled sternly: "she said, between her ground teeth, "the father forbade me the house that was my heritage! I have but to lift a finger and breathe a word, and, desolate as I am, I thrust from that home the son! The spoiler left me the world—I leave his son the grave!"

"But," said Varney, doggedly pursuing his dreadful object, "why force me to repeat that his is not the only life between you and your son's inheritance? St. John gone, Helen still remains. And what, if your researches fail, are we to lose the rich harvest which Helen will yield us—a harvest you reap with the same sickle which gathers in your revenge? Do you no longer see in Helen's face the features of her mother? Is the perfidy of William Mainwaring forgotten or forgiven?"

"Gabriel Varney," said Lucretia, in a hollow and tremulous voice, "when in that hour in which my whole being was revulsed, and I heard the cord snap from the anchor, and saw the demons of the storm gather round my bark—when, in that hour, I stooped calmly down and kissed my rival's brow, I murmured an oath, which seemed not inspired by my own soul, but by an influence henceforth given to my fate—I vowed that the perfidy dealt to me should be repaid—I vowed that the ruin of my own existence should fall on the brow which I kissed. I vowed that if shame and disgrace were to supply the inheritance I had forfeited, I would not stand alone amidst the scorn of the pitiless world. In the vision of my agony, I saw, afar, the altar dressed, and the bride-chamber prepared, and I breathed my curse, strong as prophecy, on the marriage-

hearth and the marriage-bed. Why dream, then, that I would rescue the loathed child of that loathed union from your grasp?—But is the time come? Yours may be come—is mine?"

Something so awful there was in the look of his accomplice—so intense in the hate of her low voice—that Varney, wretch as he was, and contemplating at that very hour the foulest, and most hideous guilt, drew back, appalled.

Madame Dalibard resumed, and in a somewhat softer tone, but softened only by the anguish of despair.

"Oh, had it been otherwise, what might I have been! Given over from that hour to the very incarnation of plotting crime—none to resist the evil impulse of my own maddening heart—the partner, forced on me by fate, leading me deeper and deeper into the inextricable hell—from that hour, fraud upon fraud, guilt upon guilt, infamy heaped on infamy, till I stand a marvel to myself that the thunderbolt falls not—that Nature thrusts not from her breast a living outrage on all her laws! Was I not justified in the desire of retribution? Every step that I fell, every glance that I gave to the gulf below, increased but in me the desire for revenge. All my acts had flowed from one fount—should the stream roll pollution, and the fount spring pure?"

"You have had your revenge on your rival and her husband."

"I had it, and I passed on!" said Lucretia with nostrils dilated as with haughty triumph; "They were crushed, and I suffered them to live! Nay, when, by chance, I heard of William Mainwaring's death, I bowed down my head, and I almost think I wept. The old days came back upon me. Yes, I wept! But I had not destroyed their love. No, no; there, I had miserably failed. A

pledge of that love lived. I had left their hearth barren; Fate sent them a comfort, which I had not foreseen. And suddenly my hate returned, my wrongs rose again, my vengeance was not sated. The love that had destroyed more than my life—my soul, rose again and cursed me in the face of Helen. The oath which I took when I kissed my rival's brow, demanded another prey when I kissed the child of those nuptials."

"You are prepared at last, then, to act!" cried Varney, in a tone of savage joy.

At that moment, close under the window, rose, sudden and sweet, the voice of one singing—the young voice of Helen. The words were so distinct that they came to the ears of the dark-plotting, and guilty pair. In the song itself there was little to remark, or peculiarly apposite to the consciences of those who heard; yet in the extreme and touching purity of the voice, and in the innocence of the general spirit of the words, trite as might be the image they conveyed, there was something that contrasted so fearfully their own thoughts and minds, that they sat silent, looking vacantly into each other's faces, and shrinking, perhaps to turn their eyes within themselves.

HELEN'S HYMN.

"Ye fade, yet still how sweet, ye Flowers!
Your scent outlives the bloom!
So Father, may my mortal hours
Grow sweeter towards the tomb!

"In withered leaves a healing cure
The simple gleaners find;
So may our withered hopes endure
In virtues left behind!

"Oh, not to me be vainly given
The lesson ye bestow,
Of thoughts that rise in sweets to Heaven,
And turn to use below."

The song died, but still the listeners remained silent, till at length shaking off the effect, with his laugh of discordant irony, Varney said,—

"Sweet innocence, fresh from the nursery! Would it not be sin to suffer the world to mar it? You hear the prayer—why not grant it, and let the flower '*turn to use below?*'"

"Ah, but could it wither first!" muttered Lucretia, with an accent of suppressed rage. "Do you think that her—that his—daughter is to me but a vulgar life, to be sacrificed merely for gold? Imagine away your sex, man! Women only know what I—such as I, woman still—feel in the presence of the pure! Do you fancy that I should not have held death a blessing, if death could have found me in youth such as Helen is? Ah, could she but live to suffer! Die! Well, since it must be—since my son

requires the sacrifice—do as you will with the victim that death mercifully snatches from my grasp. I could have wished to prolong her life, to load it with some fragment of the curse her parents heaped upon me!—baffled love, and ruin, and despair! I could have hoped in this division of the spoil, that mine had been the vengeance, if yours the gold. You want the life—I the heart;—the heart to torture first, and then—why then—more willingly than I do now, could I have thrown the carcase to the jackal!"

"Listen!" began Varney, when the door opened, and Helen herself stood unconsciously smiling at the threshold.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAWYER AND THE BODY-SNATCHER.

THAT same evening, Beck, according to appointment, met Percival, and showed him the dreary-looking house, which held the fair stranger who had so attracted his youthful fancy. And Percival looked at the high walls, with the sailor's bold desire for adventure, while confused visions reflected from plays, operas, and novels, in which scaling walls with rope ladders and dark lanterns, was represented as the natural avocation of a lover, flitted across his brain;—and certainly he gave a deep sigh, as his common sense plucked him back from such romance. However, having now ascertained the house, it would be easy to learn the name of its inmates, and to watch or make his opportunity. As slowly and reluctantly he walked back to the spot where he had left his cabriolet, he entered into some desultory conversation with his strange guide; and the pity he had before conceived for Beck, increased upon him, as he talked and listened. This benighted mind, only illumined by a kind of miserable astuteness, and that 'cunning of the belly' which is born of want to engender avarice—this joyless temperament—this age in youth—this living reproach, rising up from the stones of London against our social indifference to the souls which wither and rot under the hard eyes of science and the deaf ears of wealth, had a pathos for his lively sympathies and his fresh heart.

"If ever you want a friend, come to me," said St. John, abruptly.

The sweeper stared, and a gleam of

diviner nature, a ray of gratitude and unselfish devotion, darted through the fog and darkness of his mind. He stood, with his hat off, watching the wheels of the cabriolet, as it bore away the happy child of fortune, and then shaking his head, as at some puzzle that perplexed and defied his comprehension, strode back to the town, and bent his way homeward.

Between two and three hours after, Percival thus parted from the sweeper, a man whose dress was little in accordance with the scene in which we present him, threaded his way through a foul labyrinth of alleys in the worst part of St. Giles's: a neighbourhood, indeed, carefully shunned at dusk, by wealthy passengers; for here dwelt not only Penury in its grimmest shape, but the desperate and dangerous Guilt, which is not to be lightly encountered in its haunts and domiciles. Here children imbibe vice with their mother's milk. Here Prostitution, commencing with childhood, grows fierce and sanguinary in the teens, and leagues with theft and murder. Here slinks the pickpocket—here emerges the burglar—here skulks the felon. Yet all about and all around, here, too, may be found virtue in its rarest and noblest form—virtue outshining circumstance and defying temptation—the virtue of utter poverty, which groans and yet sins not. So interwoven are these webs of penury and fraud, that in one court your life is not safe, but turn to the right hand, and in the other, you might sleep safely in that worse than Irish shealing, though your pockets

were full of gold. Through these haunts, the ragged and penniless may walk unfearing, for they have nothing to dread from the lawless—more, perhaps, from the law; but the wealthy, the respectable, the spruce, the dainty, let them beware the spot, unless the policeman is in sight, or day is in the skies!

As this passenger, whose appearance, as we have implied, was certainly not that of a denizen, turned into one of the alleys, a rough hand seized him by the arm, and suddenly a group of girls and tatterdemalions issued from a house, in which the lower shutters unclosed, showed a light burning, and surrounded him with a hoarse whoop.

The passenger whispered a word in the ear of the grim blackguard who had seized him, and his arm was instantly released.

"Hist! a pal: he has the catch," said the blackguard, surlily. The group gave way, and by the light of the clear star-lit skies and a single lamp, hung at the entrance of the alley, gazed upon the stranger. But they made no effort to detain him; and as he disappeared in the distant shadows, hastened back into the wretched hostelry, where they had been merry-making. Meanwhile, the stranger gained a narrow court, and stopped before a house in one of its angles—a house taller than the rest—so much taller than the rest, that it had the effect of a tower; you would have supposed it (perhaps, rightly) to be the last remains of some ancient building of importance, around which, as population thickened and fashion changed, the huts below it had insolently sprung up. Quaint and massive pilasters, black with the mire and soot of centuries, flanked the deep-set door; the windows were heavy with mullions and transoms, and strongly barred in the lower floor; but few of the panes were whole, and only

here and there had any attempt been made to keep out the wind and rain by rags, paper, old shoes, old hats, and other ingenious contrivances. Beside the door was conveniently placed a row of some ten or twelve bell-pulls, appertaining no doubt to the various lodgements into which the building was subdivided. The stranger did not seem very familiar with the appurtenances of the place. He stood in some suspense, as to the proper bell to select, but at last guided by a brass-plate annexed to one of the pulls, which, though it was too dark to decipher the inscription, denoted a claim to superior gentility than the rest of that nameless class, he hazarded a tug, which brought forth a larum loud enough to startle the whole court from its stillness.

In a minute or less, the casement in one of the upper stories opened, a head peered forth, and one of those voices peculiar to low debauch—raw, cracked, and hoarse—called out, "Who waits?"

"Is it you, Grabman?" asked the stranger, dubiously.

"Yes; Nicholas Grabman, attorney-at-law, sir, at your service: and your name?"

"Jason," answered the stranger.

"Ho! there—ho! Beck," cried the cracked voice to some one within; "go down and open the door."

In a few moments the heavy portal swung and creaked, and yawned sullenly, and a gaunt form, halfundressed, with an inch of a farthing rushlight, glimmering through a battered lantern, in its hand, presented itself to Jason. The last eyed the ragged porter sharply.

"Do you live here?"

"Yes," answered Beck, with the cringe habitual to him. "H-up the ladder, vith the rats, drat'em."

"Well, lead on—hold up the lantern; a devil of a dark place this!" grumbled Jason, as he nearly stumbled

over sundry broken chattels, and gained a flight of rude, black, broken stairs, that creaked under his tread.

"St! 'st!" said Beck, between his teeth, as the stranger, halting at the second floor, demanded, in no gentle tones, whether Mr. Grabman lived in the chimney-pots.

"St! 'st!—don't make such a rumpus, or No. 7 will be at you."

"What do I care for No. 7? and who the devil is No. 7?"

"A Body-snatcher!" whispered Beck, with a shudder. "He's a dilligent sleeper, and can't abide having his night's rest spilt. And he's the houlrageoustest great eretur, when he's h-up in his tautrums—it makes your air stand on ind to ear him!"

"I should like very much to hear him, then," said the stranger curiously. And while he spoke, the door of No. 7 opened abruptly. A huge head, covered with matted hair, was thrust for a moment through the aperture, and two dull eyes, that seem covered with a film, like that of the birds which feed on the dead, met the stranger's bold sparkling orbs.

"Hell and fury," bawled out the voice of this ogre, like a clap of near thunder, "if you two keep—tramp, tramp there, close at my door, I'll make you meat for the surgeons—b—— you!"

"Stop a moment, my civil friend," said the stranger, advancing; "just stand where you are; I should like to make a sketch of your head."

That head protruded farther from the door, and with it an enormous bulk of chest and shoulder. But the adventurous visiter was not to be daunted. He took out, very coolly, a pencil, and the back of a letter, and began his sketch.

The body-snatcher stared at him an instant, in mute astonishment; but that operation and the composure of the artist were so new to him, that they actually inspired him with terror.

He slunk back—banged-to the door. And the stranger, putting up his implements, said, with a disdainful laugh, to Beck, who had slunk away into a corner—

"No. 7 knows well how to take care of No. 1. Lead on, and be quick then!"

As they continued to mount, they heard the body-snatcher growling and blaspheming in his den, and the sound made Beck elamber the quicker, till at the next landing-place, he took breath, threw open a door, and Jason, pushing him aside, entered first.

The interior of the room bespoke better circumstances than might have been supposed from the approach: the floor was covered with sundry scraps of carpets, formerly of different hues and patterns, but mellowed by time into one threadbare mass of grease and canvas. There was a good fire on the hearth, though the night was warm: there were sundry volumes piled round the walls, in the binding peculiar to law books; in a corner, stood a tall desk, of the fashion used by clerks, perched on tall slim legs, and companioned by a tall slim stool. On a table before the fire, were scattered the remains of the nightly meal; broiled bones, the skeleton of a herring; and the steam rose from a tumbler, containing a liquid, colourless as water, but poisonous as gin.

The room was squalid and dirty, and bespoke mean and slovenly habits, but it did not bespeak penury and want; it had even an air of filthy comfort of its own—the comfort of the swine in its warm sty. The occupant of the chamber was in keeping with the localities. Figure to yourself a man of middle height—not thin, but void of all muscular flesh, bloated, puffed, unwholesome. He was dressed in a grey flannel gown and short breeches, the stockings wrinkled and distained, the feet in slippers. The stomach was that of a

portly man, the legs those of a skeleton; the cheeks full and swollen, like a plough-boy's, but livid, bespeckled, of a dull lead-colour, like a patient in the dropsy. The head, covered in patches with thin, yellowish hair, gave some promise of intellect, for the forehead was high, and appeared still more so from partial baldness; the eyes, embedded in fat and wrinkled skin, were small and lustreless, but they still had that acute look which education and ability communicate to the human orb; the mouth most showed the animal—full-lipped,—coarse, and sensual; while, behind one of two great ears stuck a pen.

You see before you, then, this slatternly figure—slipshod, half-clothed, with a sort of shabby demi-gentility about it—half ragamuffin, half clerk; while, in strong contrast, appeared the new-comer, scrupulously neat, new—with bright black satin stock, coat cut jauntily to the waist, varnished boots, kid gloves, and trim moustache.

Behind this sleek and comely personage, on knock-knees, in torn shirt open at the throat, with apathetic, listless, unlighted face, stood the lean and gawkey Beck.

"Set a chair for the gentleman," said the inmate of the chamber to Beck, with a dignified waive of the hand.

"How do you do, Mr.—Mr.—humph—Jason?—how do you do?—always smart and blooming—the world thrives with you."

"The world is a farm, that thrives with all who till it properly, Grabman," answered Jason, drily, and with his handkerchief he carefully dusted the chair on which he then daintily deposited his person.

"But who is your Ganymede—your valet, your gentleman usher?"

"Oh! a lad about town, who lodges above! and does odd jobs for me—

brushes my coat, cleans my shoes, and, after his day's work, goes an errand now and then. Make yourself scarce Beck!—Anatomy, vanish!"

Beck grinned, nodded, pulled hard at a flake of his hair, and closed the door.

"One of your brotherhood, that?" asked Jason, carelessly.

"He, oaf!—no," said Grabman, with profound contempt in his sickly visage. "He works for his bread!—instinct!—turnspits, and truffle-dogs, and some silly men have it!—What an age since we met—shall I mix you a tumbler?"

"You know I never drink your vile spirits; though in Champagne and Bordeaux I am any man's match."

"And how the devil do you keep old black thoughts out of your mind by those washy potations?"

"Old black thoughts!—of what?"

"Of black actions, Jason. We have not met since you paid me for recommending the nurse who attended your uncle in his last illness?"

"Well, poor coward?"

Grabman knit his thin eyebrows, and gnawed his blubber lip—

"I am no coward, as you know."

"Not when a thing is to be done, but after it is done. You brave the substance, and tremble at the shadow. I dare say you see ugly goblins in the dark, Grabman."

"Ay, ay; but it is no use talking to you. You call yourself Jason, because of your yellow hair, or your love for the golden fleece; but your old comrades called you *Rattlesnake*, and you have its blood, as its venom."

"And its charm, man," added Jason, with a strange smile, that, though hypocritical and constrained, had yet a certain softness, and added greatly to the comeliness of features, which many might call beautiful, and all would allow to be regular and symmetrical. "I shall find at least

ten love-letters on my table, when I go home. But enough of these fopperies: I am here on business."

"Law, of course; I am your man—who's the victim?" and a hideous grin on Grabman's face contrasted the sleek smile that yet lingered upon his visitor's.

"No; something less hazardous, but not less lucrative than our old practices. This is a business that may bring you hundreds, thousands—that may take you from this hotel, to speculate at the West End—that may change your gin into Lafitte, and your herring into venison—that may lift the broken attorney again upon the wheel,—again to roll down, it may be; but that is your affair."

"Fore Gad, open the case," cried Grabman, eagerly, and, shoving aside the ignoble relics of his supper, he leaned his elbows on the table, and his chin on his damp palms, while eyes, that positively brightened into an expression of greedy and relentless intelligence, were fixed upon his visitor.

"The case runs thus," said Jason: "Once upon a time, there lived, at an old house in Hampshire, called Laughton, a wealthy baronet named St. John. He was a bachelor—his estates at his own disposal. He had two nieces and a more distant kinsman. His eldest niece lived with him—she was supposed to be destined for his heiress; circumstances, needless to relate, brought upon this girl her uncle's displeasure—she was dismissed his house. Shortly afterwards he died, leaving to his kinsman—a Mr. Vernon—his estates, with remainder to Vernon's issue, and, in default thereof—first, to the issue of the younger niece, next to that of the elder and disinherited one. The elder married, and was left a widow, without children. She married *again*, and had a son. Her second husband, for some reason or other, conceived

ill opinions of his wife. In his last illness (he did not live long) he resolved to punish the wife by robbing the mother. He sent away the son—nor have we been able to discover him since. It is that son whom you are to find."

"I see, I see!—go on," said Grabman. "This son is now the remainderman. How lost?—when?—what year?—what trace?"

"Patience! You will find in this paper the date of the loss, and the age of the child, then a mere infant. Now for the trace. This husband—did I tell you his name?—no—Alfred Braddell—had one friend more intimate than the rest—John Walter Ardworth, a cashiered officer, a ruined man, pursued by bill-brokers, Jews, and bailiffs. To this man we have lately had reason to believe that the child was given. Ardworth, however, was shortly afterwards obliged to fly his creditors. We know that he went to India, but if residing there, it must have been under some new name, and we fear he is now dead. All our inquiries at least, after this man—have been fruitless. Before he went abroad, he left with his old tutor a child, corresponding in age to that of Mrs. Braddell's. In this child, she thinks she recognises her son. All that you have to do is to trace his identity, by good legal evidence—don't smile in that foolish way—I mean sound, *bond fide* evidence, that will stand the fire of cross-examination; you know what *that* is! You will therefore find out—first, whether Braddell did consign his child to Ardworth, and, if so, you must then follow Ardworth, with that child in his keeping, to Matthew Fielden's house, whose address you find noted in the paper I gave you, together with many other memoranda as to Ardworth's creditors, and those who" he is likely to have come across."

"John Ardworth, I see!"

"John *Walter* Ardworth, commonly called *Walter*; he, like me, preferred to be known only by his second baptismal name. He, because of a favourite Radical godfather—I, because *Honoré* is an inconvenient Gallicism, and perhaps when *Honoré Mirabeau* (*my* godfather) went out of fashion with the *sans-culottes*; my father thought *Gabriel* a safer designation. Now I have told you all!"

"What is the mother's maiden name?"

"Her maiden name was *Clavering*; she was married under that of *Dalibard*, her first husband."

"And," said *Grabman*, looking over the notes in the paper given to him, "it is at *Liverpool* that the husband died, and whence the child was sent away?"

"It is so; to *Liverpool* you will go first. I tell you fairly, the task is difficult, for hitherto it has foiled me. I knew but one man who, without flattery, could succeed; and therefore I spared no pains to find out *Nicholas Grabman*. You have the true ferret's faculty; you, too, are a lawyer, and sniff evidence in every breath. Find up a son—a legal son—a son to be shown in a court of law, and the moment he steps into the lands and the Hall of *Laughton*, you have 5000*l*."

"Can I have a bond to that effect?"

"My bond I fear is worth no more than my word. Trust to the last;—if I break it you know enough of my secrets to hang me!"

"Don't talk of hanging—I hate that subject. But stop—if found, does this son succeed? Did this *Mr. Vernon* leave no heir—this other sister continue single, or prove barren?"

"Oh, true! he, *Mr. Vernon*, who by will took the name of *St. John*,—he left issue—but only one son still survives, a minor and unmarried.

The sister, too, left a daughter; both are poor sickly creatures—their lives not worth a straw. Never mind them. You find *Vincent Braddell*, and he will not be long out of his property, nor you out of your 5000*l*! You see, under these circumstances, a bond might become dangerous evidence!"

Grabman emitted a fearful and tremulous chuckle—a laugh, like the laugh of a superstitious man when you talk to him of ghosts and churchyards. He chuckled—and his hair bristled! But, after a pause, in which he seemed to wrestle with his own conscience, he said—"Well, well—you are a strange man, *Jason*, you love your joke—I have nothing to do, except to find out this ultimate remainder-man—mind that!"

"Perfectly; nothing like subdivision of labour."

"The search will be expensive!"

"There is oil for your wheels," answered *Jason*, putting a note-book into his confidant's hands. "But mind, you waste it not; no tricks, no false play, with me; you know *Jason*, or if you like the name better, you know the *Rattlesnake*!"

"I will account for every penny," said *Grabman*, eagerly, and clasping his hands, while his pale face grew livid.

"I do not doubt it, my quill-driver. Look sharp, start to-morrow! Get thyself decent clothes, be sober, cleanly, and respectable. Act as a man who sees before him five thousand pounds. And, now light me down-stairs."

With the candle in his hand, *Grabman* stole down the rugged steps, even more timorously than *Beck* had ascended them, and put his finger to his mouth as they came in the dread vicinity of No. 7. But *Jason*, or rather *Gabriel Varney*, with that fearless, reckless bravado of temper, which, while causing half his guilt,

threw at times a false glitter over its baseness, piqued by the cowardice of his comrade—gave a lusty kick at the closed door, and shouted out—“Old Grave-stealer, come out, and let me finish your picture. Out, out!—I say—out!” Grabman left the candle on the steps, and made but three bounds to his own room.

At the third shout of his disturber, the Resurrection-man threw open his door, violently, and appeared at the gap—the upward flare of the candle showing the deep lines ploughed in his hideous face, and the immense strength of his gigantic trunk and limbs. Slight, fair, and delicate as he was, Varney eyed him deliberately, and trembled not.

“What do you want with me?” said the terrible voice, tremulous with rage.

“Only to finish your portrait, as Pluto. He was the god of Hell, you know!”

The next moment, the vast hand of the ogre hung like a great cloud over Gabriel Varney. This last, ever on his guard, sprang aside, and the light gleamed on the steel of a pistol.

“Hands off!—or——”

The click of the pistol-cock finished the sentence. The ruffian halted. A glare of disappointed fury gave a momentary lustre to his dull eyes. “P'raps, I shall meet you agin one o' these days, or nights, and I shall know ye in ten thousand.”

“Nothing like a bird in the hand, Master Grave-stealer! Where can we ever meet again?”

“P'raps in the fields—p'raps on the

road—p'raps at the Old Bailey—p'raps at the gallows—p'raps in the conviet-ship, I knows what *that* is! I was chained night and day once to a chap jist like you—didn't I break his spirit—didn't I spile his sleep? Ho, ho!—you looks a bit less varmently howdacious now—my flash cove!”

Varney hitherto had not known one pang of fear, one quicker beat of the heart before. But the image presented to his irritable fancy (always prone to brood over terrors)—the image of that companion—chained to him night and day—suddenly quelled his courage—the image stood before him palpably like the *Oulos Oneiros*—the Evil Dream of the Greeks.

He breathed loud. The body-stealer's stupid sense saw that he had produced the usual effect of terror, which gratified his brutal self-esteem; he retreated slowly, inch by inch, to the door, followed by Varney's appalled and staring eye—and closed it with such violence, that the candle was extinguished.

Varney, not daring—yes literally, not daring—to call aloud to Grabman for another light, crept down the dark stairs with hurried, ghost-like steps—and, after groping at the door-handle with one hand, while the other grasped his pistol, with a strain of horror, he succeeded at last in winning access to the street, and stood a moment to collect himself, in the open air—the damps upon his forehead, and his limbs trembling like one who has escaped by a hair-breadth the crash of a falling house.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RAPE OF THE MATTRESS.

THAT Mr. Grabman slept calmly that night, is probable enough, for his gin-bottle was empty the next morning; and it was with eyes more than usually heavy that he dozily followed the movements of Beck, who, according to custom, opened the shutters of the little den adjoining his sitting-room, brushed his clothes, made his fire, set on the kettle to boil, and laid his breakfast-things, preparatory to his own departure to the duties of the day. Stretching himself, however, and shaking off slumber, as the remembrance of the enterprise he had undertaken glanced pleasantly across him, Grabman sat up in his bed, and said in a voice that if not maudlin was affectionate, and if not affectionate was maudlin,—

"Beck, you are a good fellow! You have faults—you are human; *humanum est errare*, which means that you sometimes scorch my muffins. But, take you all in all, you are a kind creature. Beck, I am going into the country for some days. I shall leave my key in the hole in the wall—you know; take care of it when you come in. You were out late last night, my poor fellow. Very wrong! Look well to yourself, or who knows, you may be clutched by that blackguard Resurrection-man, No. 7. Well, well! to think of that Jason's fool-hardiness. But he's the worse devil of the two. Eh! what was I saying? And always give a look into my room every night before you go to roost. The place swarms with cracksmen, and one can't be too cautious. Lucky dog, you, to have nothing to be robbed of!"

Beck winced at that last remark. Grabman did not seem to notice his confusion, and proceeded, as he put on his stockings, "And Beck, you are a good fellow, and have served me faithfully: when I come back, I will bring you something handsome—a backey-box—or, who knows, a beautiful silver watch. Meanwhile, I think—let me see—yes, I *can* give you this elegant pair of small-clothes. Put out my best—the black ones. And now, Beck, I'll not keep you any longer."

The poor sweep, with many pulls at his forelock, acknowledged the munificent donation, and having finished all his preparations, hastened first to his room, to examine at leisure, and with great admiration, the drab small-clothes. *Room*, indeed, we can scarcely style the wretched inclosure which Beck called his own. It was at the top of the house, under the roof, and hot—oh, so hot, in the summer! It had one small begrimed window, through which the light of heaven never came, for the parapet, beneath which ran the choked gutter, prevented that. But the rain and the wind came in. So, sometimes, through four glassless panes, came a fugitive tom-cat. As for the rats, they held the place as their own. Accustomed to Beck, they cared nothing for him. They were the Mayors of that Palace—he only *le roi fainéant*. They ran over his bed at night; he often felt them on his face, and was convinced they would have eaten him, if there had been anything worth eating upon his bones; still, perhaps out of pre-

caution rather than charity, he generally left them a potato or two, or a crust of bread, to take off the edge of their appetites. But Beck was far better off than most who occupied the various settlements in that Alsatia—he had his room to himself. That was necessary to his sole luxury—the inspection of his treasury, the safety of his mattress; for it he paid, without grumbling, what he thought was a very high rent. To this hole in the roof there was no lock,—for a very good reason, there was no door to it. You went up a ladder, as you would go into a loft. Now, it had often been matter of much intense cogitation to Beck, whether or not he should have a door to this chamber; and the result of the cogitation was invariably the same—he dared not! What should he want with a door—a door with a lock to it—for one followed as a consequence to the other. Such a novel piece of grandeur would be an ostentatious advertisement that he had something to guard. He could have no pretence for it on the ground that he was intruded on by neighbours; no step but his own was ever caught by him ascending that ladder; it led to no other room. All the offices required for the lodgment he performed himself. His supposed poverty was a better safeguard than doors of iron. Besides this, a door, if dangerous, would be superfluous; the moment it was suspected that Beck had something worth guarding, that moment all the picklocks and skeleton keys in the neighbourhood would be in a jingle. And a cracksman of high repute lodged already on the ground-floor. So Beck's treasure, like the bird's-nest, was deposited as much out of sight as his instinct could contrive; and the locks and bolts of civilised man were equally dispensed with by bird and Beck.

On a rusty nail the sweep suspended the drab small-clothes stroked them

down lovingly, and murmured, "They be's too good for I—I should like to pop 'em! But wouldn't that be a shame? Beck, ben't you a hungrateful beast to go for to think of nothin' but the tin, ven your 'art ought to varm with hemotion? I vill vear 'em ven I waits on him. Ven he sees his own smalls bringing in the muffins, he will say, 'Beck, you becomes em!'"

Fraught with this noble resolution, the sweep caught up his broom, crept down the ladder, and, with a furtive glance at the door of the room in which the cracksman lived, let himself out, and shambled his way to his crossing. Grabman, in the meanwhile, dressed himself with more care than usual, shaved his beard from a four-days' crop, and, while seated at his breakfast, read attentively over the notes which Varney had left to him, pausing at times to make his own pencil memoranda. He then packed up such few articles as so moderate a worshipper of the Graces might require, deposited them in an old blue brief-bag; and this done he opened his door, and creeping to the threshold listened carefully. Below, a few sounds might be heard; here, the wail of a child—there, the shrill scold of a woman, in that accent above all others adapted to scold—the Irish. Farther down still, the deep bass oath of the choleric Resurrection-man; but above, all was silent. Only one floor intervened between Grabman's apartment and the ladder that led to Beck's loft. And the inmates of that room gave no sound of life. Grabman took courage, and, shuffling off his shoes, ascended the stairs; he passed the closed door of the room above—he seized the ladder with a shaking hand—he mounted, step after step—he stood in Beck's room.

Now, O Nicholas Grabman, some moralists may be harsh enough to condemn thee for what thou art

doing : kneeling yonder, in the dim light, by that curtainless pallet, with greedy fingers feeling here and there, and a placid, self-hugging smile upon thy pale lips. That poor vagabond, whom thou art about to despoil, has served thee well and faithfully, has borne with thine ill humours, thy sarcasms, thy swearings, thy kicks and buffets—often, when in the bestial sleep of drunkenness, he has found thee stretched helpless on thy floor, with a kindly hand he has moved away the sharp fender, too near that knavish head, now bent on his ruin ; or closed the open window, lest the keen air, that thy breath tainted, should visit thee with rheum and fever. Small has been his guerdon for uncomplaining sacrifice of the few hours spared to the weary drudge from his daily toil—small, but gratefully received. And if Beck had been taught to pray, he would have prayed for thee, as for a good man, O miserable sinner ! And thou art going now, Nicholas Grabman, upon an enterprise which promises thee large gains, and thy purse is filled ; and thou wantest nothing for thy wants, or thy swinish luxuries. Why should those shaking fingers itch for the poor beggar-man's hoards ?

But hadst thou been bound on an errand that would have given thee a million, thou wouldst not have left unripped that secret store which thy prying eye had discovered, and thy hungry heart had coveted. No ; since one night, fatal, alas ! to the owner of loft and treasure, when, needing Beck for some service, and fearing to call aloud, (for the Resurrection-man in the floor below thee, whose oaths even now ascend to thine ear, sleeps ill, and has threatened to make thee mute for ever if thou disturbest him in the few nights in which his dismal calling suffers him to sleep at all)—thou didst creep up the ladder, and didst see the uncon-

scious miser at his nightly work, and after the sight, didst steal down again, smiling—no ; since that night, no schoolboy ever more rootedly and ruthlessly set his mind upon nest of linnet, than thine was set upon the stores in Beck's mattress.

And yet, why, O lawyer, should rigid moralists blame thee more than such of thy tribe as live honoured and respectable, upon the frail and the poor ? Who among them ever left loft or mattress while a rap could be wrung from either ? Matters it to Astræa, whether the spoliation be made, thus nakedly and briefly, or by all the acknowledged forms in which item on item, six-and-eightpence on six-and-eightpence, the inexorable hand closes, at length, on the last farthing of duped despair ? Not—Heaven forbid !—that we make thee, foul Nicholas Grabman, a type for all the class called attorneys-at-law ! Noble hearts, liberal minds, are there amongst that brotherhood, we know, and have experienced ; but a type art thou of those whom want, and error, and need have proved—alas, too well—the lawyers of the poor. And even while we write, and even while ye read, many a Grabman steals from helpless toil the savings of a life.

Ye poor hoards—darling delights of your otherwise joyless owner—how easily has his very fondness made ye the prey of the spoiler ! How gleefully when the pence swelled into a shilling have they been exchanged into the new bright piece of silver, the newest and brightest that could be got ! then the shillings into crowns, then the crowns into gold—got slyly and at a distance, and contemplated with what rapture !—so that, at last, the total lay manageable and light in its radiant compass. And what a total !—what a surprise to Grabman ! Had it been but a sixpence, he would have taken it ; but to grasp sovereigns, by the handful, it was too

much for him ; and, as he rose, he positively laughed, from a sense of fun.

But amongst his booty, there was found one thing that specially moved his mirth—it was a child's coral, with its little bells. Who could have given Beck such a bauble—or how Beck could have refrained from turning it into money would have been a fit matter for speculation. But it was not that at which Grabman chuckled ; he laughed, first, because it was an emblem of the utter childishness and folly of the creature he was leaving penniless ; and, secondly, because it furnished his ready wit with a capital contrivance to shift Beck's indignation from his own shoulders to a party more liable to suspicion. He left the coral on the floor near the bed, stole down the ladder, reached his own room, took up his brief-bag, locked his door, slipped the key in the rat-hole, where the trusty, plundered Beck alone could find it, and went boldly down stairs ; passing successively the doors, within which still stormed the Resurrection-man, still wailed the child, still shrieked the Irish shrew ; he paused at the ground-floor occupied by Bill the cracksman, and his long-fingered, slender, quick-eyed imps, trained already to pass through broken window panes, on their precocious progress to the hulks.

The door was open, and gave a pleasant sight of the worthy family within. Bill, himself, a stout-looking fellow, with a florid, jolly, countenance, and a pipe in his mouth, was sitting at his window, with his brawny legs lolling on a table covered with the remains of a very tolerable breakfast. Four small Bills were employed in certain sports, which no doubt, according to the fashionable mode of education, instilled useful lessons under the artful guise of playful amusement. Against the wall, at one corner of the room, was affixed a row

of bells, from which were suspended exceedingly tempting apples by slender wires. Two of the boys were engaged in the innocent entertainment of extricating the apples without occasioning any alarm from the bells ; a third was amusing himself at a table, covered with mock rings and trinkets, in a way that seemed really surprising ; with the end of a finger dipped probably in some glutinous matter, he just touched one of the gew-gaws, and lo, it vanished !—vanished so magically, that the quickest eye could scarcely trace whither ; sometimes up a cuff, sometimes into a shoe—here, there, anywhere—except back again upon the table. The fourth, an urchin apparently about five years old ; he might be much younger, judging from his stunted size ; somewhat older, judging from the vicious acuteness of his face, on the floor under his father's chair, was diving his little hand into the paternal pockets in search for a marble, sportively hidden in those capacious recesses. On the rising geniuses around him, Bill, the cracksman, looked, and his father's heart was proud.

Pausing at the threshold, Grabman looked in, and said, cheerfully, “Good day to you—good day to you all, my little dears.”

“Ah, Grabman,” said Bill, rising, and making a bow, for Bill valued himself much on his politeness—“come to blow a clond, eh ? Bob !” (this to the eldest born ;) “manners, sir ; wipe your nose, and set a chair for the gent.”

“Many thanks to you Bill, but I can't stay now—I have a long journey to take. But bless my soul, how stupid I am ; I have forgotten my clothes-brush. I knew there was something on my mind all the way I was coming down stairs. I was saying to myself, ‘Grabman, there is something forgotten !’”

"I know what that ere feelin' is," said Bill, thoughtfully; "I had it myself the night afore last; and sure enough when I got to the—but that's neither here nor there. Bob, run up stairs, and fetch down Mr. Grabman's clothes-brush. 'Tis the least you can do for a gent who saved your father from the fate of them ere innocent apples,—your fist, Grabman. I have a heart in my buzzom;—cut me open, and you will find there '*Halibi* and Grabman!' Give Bob your key."

"The brush is not in my room," answered Grabman; "it is at the top of the house; up the ladder, in Beck's loft—Beek, the sweeper. The stupid dog always keeps it there, and forgot to give it me. Sorry to occasion my friend Bob so much trouble."

"Bob has a soul above trouble; his father's heart beats in his buzzom. Bob, track the dancers. Up like a lark—and down like a dump."

Bob grinned, made a mow at Mr. Grabman, and scampered up the stairs.

"You never attends our free-and-easy," said Bill; "but we toasts you, with three times three, and up standing. 'Tis a hungrateful world! But some men has a heart; and, to those who has a heart, Grabman is a trump!"

"I am sure, whenever I can do

you a service, you may reckon on me. Meanwhile, if you could get that cursed bullying fellow who lives under me to be a little more civil, you would oblige me."

"Under you? No. 7! No. 7—is it? Grabman, h-am I a man? Is this a h-arm, and this a bunch of fives? I dare's do all that does become a man; but No. 7 is a body-snatcher! No. 7 has bullied me—and I bore it! No. 7 might whop me—and this h-arm would let him whop! He lives with graves, and churchyards, and stiff 'uns—that damnable No. 7! Ask some'at else, Grabman. I dares not touch No. 7 any more than the ghosteses."

Grabman sneered as he saw that Bill, stout rogue as he was, turned pale while he spoke; but at that moment Bob reappeared with the clothes-brush, which the ex-attorney thrust into his pocket; and shaking Bill by the hand, and patting Bob on the head, he set out on his journey.

Bill re-seated himself, muttering, "Bully a body-snatcher! 'drot that Grabman, does he want to get rid of poor Bill?"

Meanwhile Bob exhibited sllily, to his second brother, the sight of Beck's stolen coral. The children took care not to show it to their father. They were already inspired by the laudable ambition to set up in business on their own account.

CHAPTER VIII.

PERCIVAL VISITS LUCRETIA.

HAVING once ascertained the house in which Helen lived, it was no difficult matter for St. John to learn the name of the guardian whom Beck had supposed to be her mother. No common delight mingled with Percival's amaze, when in that name he recognised one borne by his own kinswoman. Very little, indeed, of the family history was known to him. Neither his father nor his mother ever willingly conversed of the fallen heiress—it was a subject which the children had felt to be proscribed; but in the neighbourhood, Percival had, of course, heard some mention of Lucretia, as the haughty and accomplished Miss Clavering—who had, to the astonishment of all, stooped to a *mésalliance* with her uncle's French librarian. That her loss of the St. John property, the succession of Percival's father, were unexpected by the villagers and squires around, and perhaps set down to the caprice of Sir Miles, or to an intellect impaired by apoplectic attacks, it was not likely that he should have heard. The rich have the polish of their education, and the poor that instinctive tact so wonderful amongst the agricultural peasantry, to prevent such unmannerly disclosures or unwelcome hints; and, both by rich and poor, the Vernon St. Johns were too popular and respected for wanton allusions to subjects calculated to pain them. All, therefore, that Percival knew of his relation, was that she had resided from infancy with Sir Miles; that after their uncle's death, she had married an inferior in

rank, of the name of Dalibard, and settled abroad; that she was a person of peculiar manners; and, he had heard somewhere, of rare gifts. He had been unable to learn the name of the young lady staying with Madame Dalibard; he had learned only that she went by some other name, and was not the daughter of the lady who rented the house. Certainly, it was possible that this last might not be his kinswoman, after all. The name, though strange to English ears, and not common in France, was no sufficient warrant for Percival's high spirits at the thought that he had now won legitimate and regular access to the house—still it allowed him to call; it furnished a fair excuse for a visit.

How long he was at his toilet that day, poor boy! How sedulously, with comb and brush, he sought to smoothe into straight precision that luxuriant labyrinth of jetty curls, which had never cost him a thought before! Gil Blas says that the toilet is a pleasure to the young though a labour to the old; Percival St. John's toilet was no pleasure to him that anxious morning.

At last, he tore himself, dissatisfied and desperate, from the glass, caught his hat and his whip, threw himself on his horse, and rode, at first very fast and at last very slowly, to the old, decayed, shabby, neglected house, that lay hid, like the poverty of fallen pride, amidst the trim villas and smart cottages of fair and flourishing Brompton.

The same servant who had opened

the gate to Ardworth appeared to his summons, and, after eyeing him for some moments with a listless stupid stare, said, "You'll be after some mistake!" and turned away.

"Stop—stop!" cried Percival, trying to intrude himself through the gate; but the servant blocked up the entrance sturdily. "It is no mistake at all, my good lady. I have come to see Madame Dalibard, my—my relation!"

"Your relation!" and again the woman stared at Percival with a look through the dull vacancy of which some distrust was dimly perceptible. "Bide a bit there, and give us your name."

Percival gave his card to the servant, with his sweetest and most persuasive smile. She took it with one hand, and, with the other, turned the key in the gate, leaving Percival outside. It was five minutes before she returned, and she then, with the same prim, smileless expression of countenance opened the gate, and motioned him to follow.

The kind-hearted boy sighed as he cast a glance at the desolate and poverty-stricken appearance of the house, and thought within himself—"Ah, pray Heaven, she may be my relation, and then I shall have the right to find her, and that sweet girl, a very different home!" The old woman threw open the drawing-room door, and Percival was in the presence of his deadliest foe! The arm-chair was turned towards the entrance, and from amidst the coverings that hid the form, the remarkable countenance of Madame Dalibard emerged, sharp and earnest, directly fronting the intruder.

"So," she said slowly, and, as it were, devouring him with her keen, steadfast eyes—"so, you are Percival St. John! Welcome! I did not know that we should ever meet. I have not sought you—you seek

me! Strange—yes, strange—that the young and the rich should seek the suffering and the poor!"

Surprised and embarrassed by this singular greeting, Percival halted abruptly in the middle of the room and there was something inexpressibly winning in his shy, yet graceful confusion. It seemed, with silent eloquence, to apologise and to deprecate. And when, in his silvery voice, scarcely yet tuned to the fullness of manhood, he said, feelingly, "Forgive me, Madam, but my mother is not in England,"—the excuse evinced such delicacy of idea, so exquisite a sense of high breeding, that the calm assurance of worldly ease could not have more attested the chivalry of the native gentleman.

"I have nothing to forgive, Mr. St. John," said Lucretia, with a softened manner. "Pardon me rather, that my infirmities do not allow me to rise to receive you. This seat,—here,—next to me. You have a strong likeness to your father."

Percival received this last remark as a compliment, and bowed. Then, as he lifted his ingenuous brow, he took, for the first time, a steady view of his new found relation. The peculiarities of Lucretia's countenance in youth had naturally deepened with middle-age. The contour, always too sharp and pronounced, was now strong and bony as a man's: the line between the eyebrows was hollowed into a furrow. The eye retained its old uneasy, sinister, side long glance; or, at rare moments, (as when Percival entered,) its searching penetration, and assured command; but the eyelids themselves, red and injected, as with grief or vigil, gave something haggard and wild, whether to glance or gaze. Despite the paralysis of the frame, the face, though pale and thin, showed no bodily decay. A vigour surpassing the strength of woman, might still be seen in the play of the

bold muscles, the firmness of the contracted lips. What physicians call *vitality*; and trace at once (if experienced) on the physiognomy, as the prognostic of long life, undulated restlessly in every aspect of the face, every movement of those thin nervous hands, which, contrasting the rest of that motionless form, never seemed to be at rest. The teeth were still white and regular, as in youth; and when they shone out in speaking, gave a strange, unnatural freshness to a face otherwise so worn.

As Percival gazed, and, while gazing, saw those wandering eyes bent down, and yet *felt* they watched him, a thrill, almost of fear, shot through his heart. Nevertheless, so much more impressionable was he to charitable and trustful, than to suspicious and timid emotions, that, when Madame Dalibard, suddenly looking up, and shaking her head gently, said—

"You see but a sad wreck, young kinsman," all those instincts, which nature itself seemed to dictate for self-preservation, vanished into heavenly tenderness and pity.

"Ah!" he said, rising and pressing one of those deadly hands in both his own, while tears rose to his eyes. "Ah! since you call me kinsman, I have all a kinsman's privileges. You must have the best advice—the most skilful surgeons. Oh, you will recover—you must not despond."

Lucretia's lips moved uneasily. This kindness took her by surprise. She turned desperately away from the human gleam that shot across the sevenfold gloom of her soul: "Do not think of me," she said, with a forced smile: "it is my peculiarity not to like allusion to myself, though this time I provoked it. Speak to me of the old cedar trees at Laughton—do they stand still? You are the master of Laughton, now:—it is a noble heritage!"

Then, St. John, thinking to please her, talked of the old manor-house, described the improvements made by his father, spoke gaily of those which he himself contemplated; and as he ran on, Lucretia's brow, a moment ruffled, grew smooth and smoother, and the gloom settled back upon her soul.

All at once, she interrupted him. "How did you discover me—was it through Mr. Varney? I bade him not mention me—yet how else could you learn?" As she spoke, there was an anxious trouble in her tone, which increased, while she observed that St. John looked confused.

"Why," he began, hesitatingly, and brushing his hat with his hand; "why—perhaps you may have heard from the—that is—I think there is a young—. Ah, it is you—it is you! I see you once again!" And springing up, he was at the side of Helen, who at that instant had entered the room, and now, her eyes downcast, her cheeks blushing, her breast gently heaving,—heard, but answered not that passionate burst of joy.

Startled, Madame Dalibard (her hands firmly grasping the sides of her chair) contemplated the two. She had heard nothing, guessed nothing of their former meeting. All that had passed before between them was unknown to her. Yet, there, was evidence unmistakeable, conclusive—the son of her despoiler loved the daughter of her rival, and—if the virgin heart speaks by the outward sign—those downcast eyes, those blushing cheeks, that heaving breast, told that he did not love in vain!

Before her lurid and murderous gaze, as if to defy her, the two inheritors of a revenge unglutted by the grave—stood, united mysteriously together. Up, from the vast ocean of her hate, rose that poor isle of love; there, unconscious of the horror

around them—the victims found their footing! How beautiful at that hour their youth—their very ignorance of their own emotions—their innocent gladness—their sweet trouble! The	fell gazer drew a long breath of fiend- like complacency and glee, and her hands opened wide, and then slowly closed, as if she felt them in her grasp.
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CHAPTER IX.

THE ROSE BENEATH THE UPAS.

AND from that day, Percival had his privileged entry into Madame Dalibard's house. The little narrative of the circumstances connected with his first meeting with Helen, partly drawn from Percival, partly afterwards from Helen (with blushing and faltered excuses from the latter, for not having mentioned before an incident that night, perhaps needlessly, vex or alarm her aunt in so delicate a state of health), was received by Lucretia with rare graciousness. The connexion, not only between herself and Percival, but between Percival and Helen, was allowed, and even dwelt upon by Madame Dalibard, as a natural reason for permitting the artless intimacy which immediately sprang up between these young persons. She permitted Percival to call daily, to remain for hours, to share in their simple meals, to wander alone with Helen in the garden, assist her to bind up the ragged flowers, and sit by her in the old ivy-grown arbour, when their work was done. She affected to look upon them both as children, and to leave to them that happy familiarity which childhood only sanctions, and compared to which the affection of maturer years seems at once coarse and cold.

As they grew more familiar, the differences and similarities in their characters came out, and nothing more delightful than the harmony into which even the contrasts blended, ever invited the guardian angel to pause and smile. As flowers in some trained parterre relieve each other,

now softening, now heightening each several hue, till all unite in one concord of interwoven beauty, so these two blooming natures, brought together, seemed, where varying still, to melt and fuse their affluences into one wealth of innocence and sweetness. Both had a native buoyancy and cheerfulness of spirit, a noble trustfulness in others, a singular candour, and freshness of mind and feeling. But beneath the gaiety of Helen, there was a soft and holy under-stream of thoughtful melancholy, a high and religious sentiment that vibrated more exquisitely to the subtle mysteries of creation—the solemn unison between the bright world without, and the grave destinies of that world within (which is an imperishable soul), than the lighter and more vivid youthfulness of Percival had yet conceived. In him, lay the germs of the active mortal, who might win distinction in the bold career we run upon the surface of the earth. In her, there was that finer and more spiritual essence which lifts the poet to the golden atmosphere of dreams, and reveals in glimpses to the saint the choral Populace of Heaven. We do not say that Helen would ever have found the utterance of the poet, that her reveries, undefined and unanalysed, could have taken the sharp, clear form of words. For to the poet, practically developed and made manifest to the world, many other gifts, besides the mere poetic sense, are needed; stern study, and logical generalisation of scattered truths, and

patient observation of the characters of men, and the wisdom that comes from sorrow and passion, and a sage's experience of things actual, embracing the dark secrets of human infirmity and crime. But, despite all that has been said in disparagement or disbelief of "mute inglorious Miltons," we maintain that there are natures in which the divinest element of poetry exists, the purer and more delicate for escaping from bodily form, and evaporating from the coarser vessels into which the poet, so called, must pour the ethereal fluid. There is a certain virtue within us, comprehending our subtlest and noblest emotions, which is poetry while untold, and grows pale and poor in proportion as we strain it into poems. Nay, it may be said of this airy property of our inmost being, that, more or less, it departs from us, according as we give it forth into the world, even, as only by the loss of its particles, the rose wastes its perfume on the air. So this more spiritual sensibility dwelt in Helen, as the latent mesmerism in water, as the invisible fairy in an enchanted ring. It was an essence or divinity, shrined and shrouded in herself, which gave her more intimate and vital union with all the influences of the universe, a companion to her loneliness, an angel hymning low to her own listening soul. This made her enjoyment of Nature, in its *in*rest trifles, exquisite and profound; this gave to her tenderness of heart all the delicious and sportive variety love borrows from imagination; this lifted her piety above the mere forms of conventional religion, and breathed into her prayers the ecstasy of the saint.

But Helen was not the less filled with the sweet humanity of her age and sex; her very gravity was tinged with rosy light, as a western cloud with the sun. She had sportiveness, and caprice, and even whim, as the

butterfly, though the emblem of the soul, still flutters wantonly over every wild flower, and expands its glowing wings on the sides of the beaten road. And with a sense of weakness in the common world, (growing out of her very strength in nobler atmospheres,) she leaned the more trustfully on the strong arm of her young adorer; not fancying that the difference between them arose from superiority in her,—but rather as a bird once tamed, flies at the sight of the hawk to the breast of its owner; so from each airy flight into the loftier heaven, let but the thought of danger daunt her wing, and, as in a more powerful nature, she took refuge on that fostering heart.

The love between these children, for so, if not literally in years, in their newness to all that steals the freshness and the dew from maturer life, they may be rightly called, was such as befitted those whose souls have not forfeited the Eden. It was more like the love of fairies than of human beings. They showed it to each other, innocently and frankly; yet of love, as we of the grosser creation call it, with its impatient pains, and burning hopes, they never spoke nor dreamed. It was an unutterable, ecstatic fondness—a clinging to each other—in thought, desire, and heart—a joy more than mortal in each other's presence; yet, in parting, not that idle and empty sorrow which unfits the weak for the lonelier demands on time and life. And this, because of the wondrous trust in themselves, and in the future, which made a main part of their credulous happy natures. Neither idle fear nor jealousy—or if jealousy came, it was the pretty child-like jealousies which have no sting—of the bird if it listened to its note too long—of the flower, if Percival left Helen's side too quickly, to tie up its drooping petals, or

refresh its dusty leaves. Close by the stir of the great city, with all its fret, and chafe, and storm of life—in the desolate garden of that sombre house, and under the withering eyes of relentless Crime, revived the Arcady of old—the scene vocal to the reeds of idyllist and shepherd: and in the midst of the iron Tragedy, harmlessly and unconsciously arose the strain of the Pastoral Music.

It would be a vain effort to describe the state of Lucretia's mind, while she watched the progress of the affection she had favoured, and gazed on the spectacle of the fearless happiness she had promoted. The image of a felicity at once so great and so holy, wore to her gloomy sight the aspect of a mocking Fury. It rose in contrast to her own ghastly and crime-stained life; it did not upbraid her conscience with guilt so loudly as it scoffed at her intellect for folly. These children, playing on the verge of life, how much more of life's true secret did they already know, than she, with all her vast native powers and wasted realms of blackened and charred experience? For what had she studied, and schemed, and calculated, and toiled, and sinned? As a conqueror stricken unto death would render up all the regions vanquished by his sword for one drop of water to his burning lips, how gladly would she have given all the knowledge bought with blood and fire, to feel one moment as those children felt! Then, from out her silent and grim despair, stood forth, fierce and prominent, the great fiend, Revenge.

By a monomania, not uncommon to those who have made *self* the centre of being, Lucretia referred to her own sullen history of wrong and passion, all that bore analogy to it, however distant. She had never been enabled, without an intolerable pang of hate and envy, to contemplate courtship and love in others. From

the rudest shape to the most refined—that master-passion in the existence, at least, of woman—reminding her of her own brief episode of human tenderness and devotion, opened every wound, and wrung every fibre of a heart that, while crime had indurated it to most emotions, memory still left morbidly sensitive to one. But if tortured by the sight of love in those who had had no connexion with her fate—who stood apart from her lurid orbit, and were gazed upon only afar, (as a lost soul, from the abyss, sees the gleam of angels' wings within some planet it never has explored,) how ineffably more fierce and intolerable was the wrath that seized her, when, in her haunted imagination, she saw all Susan's rapture at the vows of Mainwaring mantling in Helen's face! All that might have disarmed a heart as hard, but less diseased, less preoccupied by revenge, only irritated more the consuming hate of that inexorable spirit. Helen's seraphic purity—her exquisite overflowing kindness, ever forgetting self—her airy cheerfulness—even her very moods of melancholy, calm and seemingly causeless as they were, perpetually galled and blistered that writhing preternatural susceptibility which is formed by the consciousness of infamy, the dreary egotism of one cut off from the charities of the world, with whom all mirth is sardonic convulsion, all sadness, rayless, and unresigned despair.

Of the two, Percival inspired her with feelings the most akin to humanity. For him, despite her bitter memories of his father, she felt something of compassion, and shrunk from the touch of his frank hand in remorse. She had often need to whisper to herself, that his life was an obstacle to the heritage of the son; of whom, as we have seen, she was in search, and whom, indeed, she believed she had already found in

John Ardworth; that it was not in wrath and in vengeance that *this* victim was to be swept into the grave, but as an indispensable sacrifice to a cherished object—a determined policy. As in the studies of her youth, she had adopted the Machiavelism of ancient state-craft as a rule admissible in private life, so she seemed scarcely to admit as a crime that which was but the removal of a barrier between her aim and her end. Before she had become personally acquainted with Percival, she had rejected all occasion to know him. She had suffered Varney to call upon him, as the old *protégé* of Sir Miles, and to wind into his intimacy—meaning to leave to her accomplice, when the hour should arrive, the dread task of destruction. This, not from cowardice, for Gabriel had once rightly described her when he said, that “if she lived with shadows she could quell them,” but simply because, more intellectually unsparing than constitutionally cruel, (save where the old vindictive memories thoroughly unsexed her,) this was a victim whose pangs she desired not to witness, over whose fate it was no luxury to gloat and revel. She wished not to see, nor to know him *living*, only to learn that he was no more, and that Helen alone stood between Laughton and her son. Now that he had himself, as if with predestined feet, crossed her threshold—that he, like Helen, had delivered himself into her toils, the hideous guilt, before removed from her hands, became haunting, fronted her face to face, and filled her with a superstitious awe.

Meanwhile, her outward manner to both her meditated victims, if moody and fitful at times, was not such as would have provoked suspicion even in less credulous hearts. From the first entry of Helen under her roof, she had been formal and measured in her welcome—kept her, as it were,

aloof, and affected no prodigal superfluity of dissimulation; but she had never been positively harsh or unkind in word or in deed, and had coldly excused herself for the repulsiveness of her manner.

“I am irritable,” she said, “from long suffering; I am unsocial from habitual solitude; do not expect from me the fondness and warmth that should belong to our relationship. Do not harass yourself with vain solicitude for one whom all seeming attention but reminds more painfully of infirmity, and who, even thus stricken down, would be independent of all cares not bought and paid for. Be satisfied to live here in all reasonable liberty, to follow your own habits and caprices uncontrolled. Regard me but as a piece of necessary furniture. You can never displease me, but when you notice that I live and suffer.”

If Helen wept bitterly at these hard words when first spoken, it was not with anger that her loving heart was so thrown back upon herself. On the contrary, she became inspired with a compassion so great that it took the character of reverence. She regarded this very coldness as a mournful dignity. She felt grateful that one who could thus dispense with, should yet have sought, her. She had heard her mother say that “she had been under great obligations to Lucretia;” and now, when she was forbidden to repay them, even by a kiss on those weary eyelids, a daughter’s hand to that sleepless pillow; when she saw that the barrier first imposed was irremovable—that no time diminished the distance her aunt set between them—that the least approach to the tenderness of service beyond the most casual offices, really seemed but to fret those excitable nerves, and fever the hand, that she ventured timorously to clasp; she retreated into herself with a sad

amaze that increased her pity, and heightened her respect. To her, love seemed so necessary a thing in the helplessness of human life, even when blessed with health and youth, that this rejection of all love in one so bowed and crippled, struck her imagination as something sublime in its dreary grandeur and stoic pride of independence. She regarded it, as of old a tender and pious nun would have regarded the asceticism of some sanctified recluse—as Teresa (had she lived in the same age) might have regarded St. Simon Stylites existing aloft from human sympathy on the roofless summit of his column of stone: And with this feeling she sought to inspire Percival. He had the heart to enter into her compassion, but not the imagination to sympathise with her reverence. Even the repugnant awe that he had first conceived for Madame Dalibard, so bold was he by temperament, he had long since cast off; he recognised only the moroseness and petulance of an habitual invalid, and shook playfully his glossy curls, when Helen, with her sweet seriousness, insisted on his recognising more.

To this house few, indeed, were the visitors admitted. The Mivers's, whom the benevolent officiousness of Mr. Fielden had originally sent thither to see their young kinswoman, now and then came to press Helen to join some party to the theatre, or Vauxhall, or a *pic-nic* in Richmond park; but when they found their overtures, which had at first been politely accepted by Madame Dalibard, were rejected, they gradually ceased their visits, wounded and indignant.

Certain it was, that Lucretia had, at one time, eagerly caught at their well-meant civilities to Helen—*now* she as abruptly declined them. Why? It would be hard to plumb into all the black secrets of that heart. It would have been but natural to her,

who shrank from dooming Helen to no worse calamity than a virgin's grave, to have designed to throw her in such uncongenial guidance, amidst all the manifold temptations of the corrupt city—to have suffered her to be seen, and to be ensnared by those gallants ever on the watch for defenceless beauty; and to contrast with their elegance of mien, and fatal flatteries—the grossness of the companions selected for her, and the unloving discomfort of the home into which she had been thrown. But now that St. John had appeared—that Helen's heart and fancy were steeled alike against more dangerous temptation,—the object to be obtained from the pressing courtesy of Mrs. Mivers existed no more. The vengeance flowed into other channels.

The only other visitors at the house were John Ardworth and Gabriel Varney.

Madame Dalibard watched vigilantly the countenance and manner of Ardworth, when, after presenting him to Percival, she whispered—"I am glad you assured me as to your sentiments for Helen. She has found *there*, the lover you wished for her—'gay and handsome as herself.'"

And, in the sudden paleness that overspread Ardworth's face, in his compressed lips, and convulsive start, she read with un-speakable rage the untold secret of his heart—till the rage gave way to complacency at the thought that the last insult to her wrongs was spared her—that her son (as son she believed he was) could not now, at least, be the successful suitor of her loathed sister's loathed child. Her discovery, perhaps, confirmed her in her countenance to Percival's progressive wooing, and half reconciled her to the pangs it inflicted on herself.

At the first introduction, Ardworth had scarcely glanced at Percival. He regarded him, but as the sleek

flutterer in the sunshine of fortune. And for the idle, the gay, the fair, the well drest, and wealthy—the sturdy workman of his own rough way, felt something of the uncharitable disdain which the laborious *have nots* too usually entertain for the prosperous *haves*. But the moment the unwelcome intelligence of Madame Dalibard was conveyed to him, the smooth-faced boy swelled into dignity and importance.

Yet it was not merely as a rival, that that strong manly heart, after the first natural agony, regarded Percival. No, he looked upon him less with anger than with interest—as the one in whom Helen's happiness was henceforth to be invested. And to Madame Dalibard's astonishment, for this nature was wholly new to her experience, she saw him, even in that first interview, composing his rough face to smiles, smoothing his bluff imperious accents into courtesy, listening patiently, watching benignly, and at last thrusting his large hand frankly forth—gripping Percival's slender fingers in his own; and then, with an indistinct chuckle, that seemed half laugh and half groan, as if he did not dare to trust himself farther, he made his wonted unceremonious nod, and strode hurriedly from the room.

But he came again, and again, almost daily, for about a fortnight; sometimes, without entering the house, he would join the young people in the garden, assist them with awkward hands in their playful work on the garden, or sit with them in the ivied bower; and, warming more and more each time he came, talk at last with the cordial frankness of an elder brother. There was no disguise in this—he began to love Percival—what would seem more strange to the superficial, to admire him. Genius has a quick perception of the moral qualities; genius which, differing

thus from mere talent, is more allied to the heart than to the head, sympathises genially with goodness. Ardworth respected that young, ingenuous, unpolluted mind: he himself felt better and purer in its atmosphere. Much of the affection he cherished for Helen passed thus beautifully and nobly into his sentiments for the one whom Helen not unworthily preferred. And they grew so fond of him! as the young and gentle ever will grow fond of genius—however rough—once admitted to its companionship!

Percival, by this time, had recalled to his mind, where he had first seen that strong-featured, dark-browed countenance, and he gaily reminded Ardworth of his discourtesy, on the brow of the hill which commanded the view of London. That reminiscence made his new friend writhe; for then, amidst all his ambitious visions of the future, he had seen Helen in the distance—the reward of every labour—the fairest star in his horizon. But he strove stoutly against the regret of the illusion lost; the *vivendi cause* were left him still, and for the nymph that had glided from his clasp, he clung at least to the laurel that was left in her place. In the folds of his robust fortitude, Ardworth thus wrapped his secret. Neither of his young playmates suspected it. He would have disdained himself if he had so poisoned their pleasure. That he suffered when alone, much and bitterly, is not to be denied; but in that masculine and complete being, Love took but its legitimate rank, amidst the passions and cares of man. It soured no existence—it broke no heart—the wind swept some blossoms from the bough, and tossed wildly the agitated branches from root to summit, but the trunk stood firm.

In some of these visits to Madame Dalibard's, Ardworth renewed with

her the more private conversation which had so unsettled his past convictions as to his birth, and so disturbed the calm, strong currents of his mind. He was chiefly anxious to learn what conjectures Madame Dalibard had formed as to his parentage, and what ground there was for belief that he was near in blood to herself, or that he was born to a station less dependent on continuous exertion; but on these points the dark sibyl preserved an obstinate silence. She was satisfied with the hints she had already thrown out, and absolutely refused to say more till better authorised by the inquiries she had set on foot. Artfully, she turned from these topics of closer and more household interest, to those on which she had previously insisted—connected with the general knowledge of mankind, and the complicated science of practical life. To fire his genius, wing his energies, inflame his ambition above that slow, laborious drudgery to which he had linked the chances of his career, and which her fiery and rapid intellect was wholly unable to comprehend—save as a waste of life for uncertain and distant objects—became her task. And she saw with delight that Ardworth listened to her more assentingly than he had done at first. In truth, the pain shut within his heart, the conflict waged keenly between his reason and his passion, unfitted him, for the time, for mere mechanical employment, in which his genius could afford him no consolation. Now, genius is given to man, not only to enlighten others, but to comfort as well as to elevate himself. Thus, in all the sorrows of actual existence, the man is doubly inclined to turn to his genius for distraction. Harassed in this world of action, he knocks at the gate of that world of idea or fancy which he is privileged to enter: he escapes from the clay to the spirit.

And rarely, till some great grief comes, does the man in whom the celestial fire is lodged know all the gift of which he is possessed. At last, Ardworth's visits ceased abruptly. He shut himself up once more in his chambers; but the law books were laid aside.

Varney, who generally contrived to call when Ardworth was not there, seldom interrupted the lovers in their little paradise of the garden; but he took occasion to ripen and cement his intimacy with Percival: sometimes walked, or, (if St. John had his cabriolet,) drove home and dined with him, *tête-à-tête* in Curzon-street; and as he made Helen his chief subject of conversation, Percival could not but esteem him amongst the most agreeable of men. With Helen, when Percival was not there, Varney held some secret conferences—secret even from Percival; two or three times, before the hour in which Percival was accustomed to come, they had been out together: and Helen's face looked more cheerful than usual on their return. It was not surprising that Gabriel Varney, so displeasing to a man like Ardworth, should have won little less favour with Helen than with Percival; for, to say nothing of an ease and suavity of manner which stole into the confidence of those in whom to confide was a natural propensity, his various acquisitions and talents, imposing, from the surface over which they spread, and the glitter which they made, had an inevitable effect upon a mind so susceptible as Helen's to admiration for art and respect for knowledge. But what chiefly conciliated her to Varney, whom she regarded, moreover, as her aunt's most intimate friend, was that she was persuaded he was unhappy, and wronged by the world or fortune. Varney had a habit of so representing himself—of dwelling with a bitter

eloquence—which his natural malignity made forcible—on the injustice of the world to superior intellect. He was a great accuser of Fate. It is the illogical weakness of some evil natures to lay all their crimes, and the consequences of crime, upon *Destiny*. There was a heat, a vigour, a rush of words, and a readiness of strong, if trite, imagery in what Varney said, that deceived the young into the monstrous error that he was an enthusiast—misanthropical, perhaps, but only so from enthusiasm. How could Helen, whose slightest thought, when a star broke forth from the cloud, or a bird sung suddenly from the copse, had more of wisdom and of poetry than all Varney's gaudy and painted seemings ever could even mimic—how *could* she be so deceived? Yet so it was. Here stood a man whose youth she supposed had been devoted to refined and elevating pursuits, gifted, neglected, disappointed, solitary, and unhappy. She saw little beyond. You had but to touch her pity to win her interest, and to excite her trust. Of anything farther, even had Percival never existed, she could not have dreamed. It was because a secret and undefinable repugnance, in the midst of pity, trust, and friendship, put Varney altogether out of the light of a possible lover, that all those sentiments were so easily kindled. This repugnance arose not from the disparity between their years; it was rather that nameless uncongeniality, which does not forbid friendship but is irreconcilable with love. To do Varney justice, he never offered to reconcile the two. Not for love did he secretly confer with Helen—not for love did his heart beat against the hand which reposed so carelessly on his murderous arm.

CHAPTER X.

THE RATTLE OF THE SNAKE.

THE progress of affection between natures like those of Percival and Helen, favoured by free and constant intercourse, was naturally rapid. It was scarcely five weeks from the day he had first seen Helen, and he already regarded her as his plighted bride. During the earlier days of his courtship, Percival, enamoured and absorbed for the first time in his life, did not hasten to make his mother the *confidante* of his happiness. He had written but twice; and though he said briefly, in the second letter, that he had discovered two relations, both interesting, and one charming, he had deferred naming them, or entering into detail. This, not alone from that indescribable coyness which all have experienced in addressing even those with whom they are most intimate, in the early, half-unrevealed, and mystic emotions of first love; but because Lady Mary's letters had been so full of her sister's declining health, of her own anxieties and fears, that he had shrunk from giving her a new subject of anxiety; and a confidence, full of hope and joy, seemed to him unfeeling and unseasonable. He knew how necessarily uneasy and restless an avowal that his heart was seriously engaged to one she had never seen, would make that tender mother; and that his confession would rather add to her cares, than produce sympathy with his transports. But now, feeling impatient for his mother's assent to the formal proposals which had become due to Madame Dalibard and Helen, and taking advantage of the letter last received from her, which gave more cheering accounts of her sister, and expressed curiosity for further explanation as to his half-disclosure, he wrote at length, and cleared his breast of all its secrets. It was the same day in which he wrote this confession, and pleaded his cause, that we accompany him to the house of his sweet mistress, and leave him by her side, in the accustomed garden. Within Madame Dalibard, whose chair was set by the window, bent over certain letters, which she took, one by one, from her desk, and read slowly, lifting her eyes from time to time, and glancing towards the young people, as they walked, hand in hand, round the small demesnes, now hid by the fading foliage, now emerging into view. Those letters were the early love-epistles of William Mainwaring. She had not recurred to them for years. Perhaps she now felt that food necessary to the sustenance of her fiendish designs. It was a strange spectacle, to see this being, so full of vital energy, mobile and restless as a serpent; condemned to that helpless decrepitude, chained to the uneasy seat—not as in the resigned and passive imbecility of extreme age, but rather as one whom, in the prime of life, the rack has broken, leaving the limbs inert, the mind active, the form as one dead, the heart with superabundant vigour;—a cripple's impotence, and a Titan's will! What, in that dreary imprisonment, and amidst the silence she habitually preserved passed through the caverns of that breast, one can no more conjecture, than one can count

the blasts that sweep and rage through the hollows of impenetrable rock, or the elements that conflict in the bosom of the volcano, everlastingly at work. She had read, and replaced the letters, and leaning her cheek on her hand, was gazing vacantly on the wall, when Varney intruded on that dismal solitude.

He closed the door after him, with more than usual care; and, drawing a seat close to Lucretia's, said, "*Belle mère*, the time has arrived for *you* to act—my part is well-nigh closed."

"Ay!" said Lucretia, wearily; "what is the news you bring?"

"First," replied Varney, and, as he spoke, he shut the window, as if his whisper could possibly be heard without—"first, all this business connected with Helen is at length arranged. You know when, agreeably to your permission, I first suggested to her, as it were casually, that you were so reduced in fortune, that I trembled to regard your future,—that you had years ago sacrificed nearly half your pecuniary resources to maintain her parents—she of herself reminded me that she was entitled, when of age, to a sum far exceeding all her wants, and——"

"That I might be a pensioner on the child of William Mainwaring and Susan Mivers," interrupted Lucretia. "I know that, and thank her not. Pass on."

"And you know, too, that in the course of my conversation with the girl, I let out also incidentally that, even so, you were dependent on the chances of her life; that if she died (and youth itself is mortal) before she was of age, the sum left her by her grandfather would revert to her father's family; and so, by hints, I drew her on to ask if there was no mode by which, in case of her death, she might ensure subsistence to you. So that you see the whole scheme

was made at her own prompting. I did but, as a man of business, suggest the means—an insurance on her life."

"Varney, these details are hateful. I do not doubt that you have done all to forestal inquiry and elude risk. The girl has insured her life to the amount of her fortune?"

"To that amount only! Pooh! Her death will buy more than that! As no one single office will insure for more than 5000*l.*, and as it was easy to persuade her that such offices were liable to failure, and that it was usual to insure in several, and for a larger amount than the sum desired, I got her to enter herself at three of the principal offices. The amount paid to us on her death will be fifteen thousand pounds. It will be paid, (and here I have followed the best legal advice,) in trust to me for your benefit. Hence, therefore, even if our researches fail us, if no son of yours can be found, with sufficient evidence to prove, against the keen interests and bought advocates of heirs-at-law, the right to Laughton, this girl will repay us well, will replace what I have taken, at the risk of my neck, perhaps—certainly at the risk of the hulks, from the capital of my uncle's legacy—will refund what we have spent on the inquiry—and the residue will secure to you an independence sufficing for your wants almost for life, and to me, what will purchase with economy" (and Varney smiled) "a year or so of a gentleman's idle pleasures. Are you satisfied thus far?"

"She will die happy and innocent!" muttered Lucretia, with the growl of demoniac disappointment.

"Will you wait, then, till my forgery is detected, and I have no power to buy the silence of the trustees—wait till I am in prison, and on a trial for life and death? Reflect, every day, every hour of delay, is fraught with peril. But if my safety is nothing compared to the refinement

of your revenge, will you wait till Helen marries Percival St. John. You start! But can you suppose that this innocent love-play will not pass rapidly to its *dénouement*? It is but yesterday that Percival confided to me, that he should write this very day to his mother, and communicate all his feelings and his hopes;—that he waited but her assent, to propose formally for Helen. Now one of two things must happen. Either this mother, haughty and vain as lady mothers mostly are, may refuse consent to her son's marriage with the daughter of a disgraced banker, and the niece of that Lucretia Dalibard whom her husband would not admit beneath his roof—"

"Hold, sir!" exclaimed Lucretia, naughtily, and amidst all the passions that darkened her countenance and degraded her soul, some flash of her ancestral spirit shot across her brow; but it passed quickly, and she added, with fierce composure—"You are right; go on!"

"Either—and pardon me for an insult that comes not from me—either this will be the case; Lady Mary St. John will hasten back in alarm to London; she exercises extraordinary control over her son; she may withdraw him from us altogether, from me as well as you, and the occasion now presented to us may be lost (who knows?) for ever; or she may be a weak and fond woman,—may be detained in Italy by her sister's illness,—may be anxious that the last lineal descendant of the St. Johns should marry betimes; and, moved by her darling's prayers, may consent at once to the union. Or a third course, which Percival thinks the most probable, and which, though most unwelcome to us of all, I had well nigh forgotten, may be adopted. She may come to England, and, in order to judge her son's choice with her own eyes, may withdraw Helen from

your roof to hers. At all events, delays are dangerous—dangerous, putting aside my personal interest, and regarding only your own object—may bring to our acts new and searching eyes—may cut us off from the habitual presence either of Percival, or Helen, or both; or surround them, at the first breath of illness, with prying friends, and formidable precautions. The birds now are in our hands. Why then open the cage and bid them fly, in order to spread the net? This morning all the final documents with the Insurance Companies are completed. It remains for me but to pay the first quarterly premiums. For that I think I am prepared without drawing farther on your hoards or my own scanty resources, which Grabman will take care to drain fast enough."

"And Percival St. John?" said Madame Dalibard. "We want no idle sacrifices. If my son be *not* found, we need not that boy's ghost amongst those who haunt us."

"Surely not," said Varney; "and for my part, he may be more useful to me alive than dead. There is no insurance on *his* life, and a rich friend (credulous green-horn that he is!) is scarcely of that flock of geese which it were wise to slay from the mere hope of a golden egg. Percival St. John is your victim, not mine—not till you give the order, would I lift a finger to harm him."

"Yes, let him live, unless my son be found to me," said Madame Dalibard, almost exultingly: "let him live to forget yon fair-faced fool, leaving now, see you, so delightedly on his arm, and fancying eternity in the hollow vows of love!—let him live to wrong and abandon her by forgetfulness, though even in the grave; to laugh at his boyish dreams—to sully her memory in the arms of harlots! Oh, if the dead can suffer, let him live, that she may feel

beyond the grave his inconstancy and his fall! Methinks that that thought will comfort me, if Vincent be no more, and I stand childless in the world!"

"It is so settled, then," said Varney, ever ready to clench the business that promised gold, and relieve his apprehensions of the detection of his fraud. "And now to your noiseless hands, as soon as may be, I consign the girl: she has lived long enough!"

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE AND INNOCENCE.

WHILE this the conference between these execrable and ravening birds of night and prey, Helen and her boy-lover were thus conversing in the garden, while the autumn sun—for it was in the second week of October—broke pleasantly through the yellowing leaves of the tranquil shrubs, and the flowers, which should have died with the gone summer, still fresh by their tender care, despite the lateness of the season, smiled gratefully as their light footsteps passed.

"Yes, Helen," said Percival—"yes, you will love my mother, for she is one of those people who seem to attract love, as if it were a property belonging to them. Even my dog Beau (you know how fond Beau is of *me*!) always nestles at *her* feet, when we are at home. I own she has pride, but it is a pride that never offended any one. You know there are some flowers that we call *proud*. The pride of the flower is not more harmless than my mother's. But perhaps pride is not the right word—it is rather the aversion to anything low or mean, the admiration for everything pure and high. Ah, how that very pride, if pride it be, will make her love you, my Helen!"

"You need not tell me," said Helen, smiling seriously, "that I shall love your mother, I love her already—nay, from the first moment you said you *had* a mother, my heart leaped to her. Your mother! if ever you are really jealous, it must be of her! but that she should love me,—that it is what I doubt and fear. For

if you were my brother, Percival, I should be so ambitious for you. A nymph must rise from the stream, a sylphid from the rose, before I could allow another to steal you from my side. And if I think I should feel this only as your sister, what can be precious enough to satisfy a mother!"

"You, and you only," answered Percival, with his blithesome laugh—"you, my sweet Helen, much better than nymph or sylphid, about whom, between ourselves, I never cared three straws, even in a poem. How pleased you will be with Laughton! Do you know, I was lying awake all last night, to consider what room you would like best for your own. And at last, I have decided—come, listen—it opens from the music-gallery that overhangs the hall. From the window, you overlook the southern side of the park, and catch a view of the lake beyond. There are two niches in the wall—one for your piano, one for your favourite books. It is just large enough to hold four persons with ease—*our* mother and myself, your aunt, whom by that time we shall have petted into good humour, and if we can coax Ardworth there—the best good fellow that ever lived—I think our party will be complete. By the way, I am uneasy about Ardworth, it is so long since we have seen him; I have called three times—nay, five—but his odd-looking clerk always swears he is not at home. Tell me, Helen, now, you who know him so well—tell me, how I can serve him? You know, I am so terribly rich, (at least, I shall

be in a month or two ;)—I can never get through my money, unless my friends will help me. And is it not shocking that that noble fellow should be so poor, and yet suffer me to call him 'friend,' as if in friendship one man should want everything, and the other nothing. Still, I don't know how to venture to propose—come, you understand me, Helen—let us lay our wise heads together, and make him well off, in spite of himself."

It was in this loose, boyish talk of Percival's, that he had found the way not only to Helen's heart, but to her soul. For in this, she (grand undeveloped poetess) recognised a nobler poetry than we chain to rhythm—the poetry of generous deeds. She yearned to kiss the warm hand she held, and drew nearer to his side as she answered—"And sometimes, dear, dear Percival, you wonder why I would rather listen to you than to all Mr. Varney's bitter eloquence, or even to my dear cousin's aspiring ambition. They talk well, but it is of themselves; while you——"

Percival blushed, and checked her.

"Well," she said—"well, to your question. Alas! you know little of my cousin, if you think all our arts could decoy him out of his rugged independence, and, much as I love him, I could not wish it. But do not fear for him; he is one of those who are born to succeed, and without help."

"How do you know that, pretty prophetess?" said Percival, with the superior air of manhood. "I have seen more of the world than you have, and I cannot see why Ardworth should *succeed* as you call it;—or, if so, why he should succeed less if he swung his hammock in a better berth than that hole in Gray's Inn, and would just let me keep him a cab and a groom."

Had Percival talked of keeping John Ardworth an elephant and a palanquin, Helen could not have been more amused. She clapped her little hands in a delight that provoked Percival, and laughed out loud. Then seeing her boy-lover's lip pouted petulantly, and his brow was overcast, she said more seriously—

"Do you not know what it is to feel convinced of something which you cannot explain? Well, I feel this as to my cousin's fame and fortunes. Surely, too, you must feel it, you scarce know why, when he speaks of that future, which seems so dim and so far to *me*, as of something that belonged to him."

"Very true, Helen," said Percival, "he lays it out like the map of his estate. One can't laugh when he says so carelessly—'At such an age I shall lead my circuit—at such an age I shall be rich—at such an age I shall enter parliament—and beyond that I shall look as yet no farther.' And, poor fellow, then he will be forty-three! And in the meanwhile to suffer such privations!"

"There are no privations to one who lives in the future," said Helen, with that noble intuition into lofty natures, which at times flashed from her childish simplicity, foreshadowing what, if Heaven spare her life, her maturer intellect may develope: "For Ardworth there is no such thing as poverty. He is as rich in his hopes as we are in——" She stopped short, blushed, and continued with downcast looks—"As well might you pity me in these walks, so dreary without you. I do not live in them—I live in my thoughts of you."

Her voice trembled with emotion in those last words. She slid from Percival's arm, and timidly sate down (and he beside her) on a little mound under the single chesnut tree, that threw its shade over the garden.

Both were silent for some moments

—Percival with grateful ecstasy—Helen with one of those sudden fits of mysterious melancholy, to which her nature was so subjected.

He was the first to speak. "Helen," he said, gravely, "since I have known you, I feel as if life were a more solemn thing than I ever regarded it before. It seems to me as if a new and more arduous duty were added to those for which I was prepared—a duty, Helen, to become worthy of you! Will you smile? No—you will not smile, if I say I have had my brief moments of ambition. Sometimes as a boy, with Plutarch in my hand, stretched idly under the old cedar trees at Laughton—sometimes as a sailor, when, becalmed on the Atlantic, and my ears freshly filled with tales of Collingwood and Nelson, I stole from my comrades, and leant, musingly, over the boundless sea. But when this ample heritage passed to me—when I had no more my own fortunes to make, my own rank to build up,—such dreams became less and less frequent. Is it not true that wealth makes us contented to be obscure? Yes; I understand, while I speak, why poverty itself befriends, not cripples, Ardworth's energies. But since I have known you, dearest

Helen, those dreams return more vividly than ever. He who claims you, should be—must be—something nobler than the crowd! Helen!"—and he rose by an irresistible and restless impulse—"I shall not be contented till you are as proud of your choice as I of mine!"

It seemed, as Percival spoke and looked, as if boyhood were cast from him for ever. The unusual weight and gravity of his words, to which his tone gave even eloquence—the steady flash of his dark eyes—his erect, elastic form—all had the dignity of man. Helen gazed on him silently, and with a heart so full, that words would not come, and tears overflowed instead.

That sight sobered him at once—he knelt down beside her, threw his arms around her—it was his first embrace—and kissed the tears away.

"How have I distressed you!—why do you weep?"

"Let me weep on, Percival, dear Percival! These tears are like prayers—they speak to Heaven—and o. you!"

A step came noiselessly over the grass, and between the lovers and the sunlight, stood Gabriel Varney.

CHAPTER XII.

SUDDEN CELEBRITY AND PATIENT HOPE.

PERCIVAL was unusually gloomy and abstracted in his way to town that day, though Varney was his companion, and in the full play of those animal spirits which he owed to his unrivalled physical organisation and the obtuseness of his conscience. Seeing, at length, that his gaiety did not communicate itself to Percival, he paused and looked at him suspiciously. A falling leaf startles the steed, and a shadow the guilty man.

"You are sad, Percival?" he said, inquiringly. "What has disturbed you?"

"It is nothing—or, at least, would seem nothing to you," answered Percival, with an effort to smile, "for I have heard you laugh at the doctrine of presentiments. We sailors are more superstitious."

"What presentiment can you possibly entertain?" asked Varney, more anxiously than Percival could have anticipated.

"Presentiments are not so easily defined, Varney. But, in truth, poor Helen has infected me. Have you not remarked, that, gay as she habitually is, some shadow comes over her so suddenly, that one cannot trace the cause?"

"My dear Percival," said Varney, after a short pause, "what you say does not surprise me. It would be false kindness to conceal from you that I have heard Madame Dalibard say that her mother was, when about her age, threatened with consumptive symptoms,—but she lived many years afterwards. Nay, nay, rally yourself; Helen's appearance,

despite the extreme purity of her complexion, is not that of one threatened by the terrible malady of our climate. The young are often haunted with the idea of early death. As we grow older, that thought is less cherished; in youth it is a sort of luxury. To this mournful idea, (which you see, you have remarked as well as I,) we must attribute not only Helen's occasional melancholy, but a generosity of forethought, which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of communicating to you, though her delicacy would be shocked at my indiscretion. You know how helpless her aunt is. Well, Helen, who is entitled, when of age, to a moderate competence, has persuaded me to insure her life, and accept a trust to hold the monies (if ever unhappily due) for the benefit of my mother-in-law, so that Madame Dalibard may not be left destitute, if her niece die before she is twenty-one. How like Helen!—is it not?"

Percival was too overcome to answer.

Varney resumed—"I entreat you not to mention this to Helen—it would offend her modesty to have the secret of her good deeds thus betrayed by one to whom alone she confided them. I could not resist her entreaties; though, *entre-nous*, it cripples me not a little to advance for her the necessary sums for the premiums. Apropos, this brings me to a point on which I feel, as the vulgar idiom goes, 'very awkward,'—as I always do in these confounded money

matters. But you were good enough to ask me to paint you a couple of pictures for Laughton. Now, if you could let me have some portion of the sum, whatever it be (for I don't price my paintings to you), it would very much oblige me."

Percival turned away his face as he wrung Varney's hand, and muttered, with a choked voice, "Let me have my share in Helen's divine forethought. Good heavens! she, so young, to look thus beyond the grave, always for others—for others!"

Callous as the wretch was, Percival's emotion and his proposal struck Varney with a sentiment like compunction. He had designed to appropriate the lover's gold, as it was now offered; but that Percival himself should propose it, blind to the grave, to which that gold paved the way, was a horror not counted in those to which his fell cupidity and his goading apprehensions had familiarised his conscience.

"No," he said, with one of those wayward scruples to which the blackest criminals are sometimes susceptible—"no. I have promised Helen to regard this as a loan to her, which she is to repay me when of age. What you may advance me is for the pictures. I have a right to do as I please with what is bought by my own labour. And the subjects of the pictures—what shall they be?"

"For one picture try and recall Helen's aspect and attitude when you came to us in the garden, and entitle your subject—'The Foreboding.'"

"Hem!" said Varney, hesitatingly. "And the other subject?"

"Wait for that, till the joy-bells at Laughton have welcomed a bride, and then—and then, Varney," added Percival, with something of his natural joyous smile, "you must take the expression as you find it. Once under

my care, and, please Heaven, the one picture shall laughingly upbraid the other!"

As this was said, the cabriolet stopped at Percival's door. Varney dined with him that day; and if the conversation flagged, it did not revert to the subject which had so darkened the bright spirits of the host, and so tried the hypocrisy of the guest. When Varney left, which he did as soon as the dinner was concluded, Percival silently put a cheque into his hands, to a greater amount than Varney had anticipated even from his generosity.

"This is for four pictures, not two," he said, shaking his head; and then, with his characteristic conceit, he added—"Well, some years hence, the world shall not call them overpaid. Adieu, my Medici: a dozen such men, and Art would revive in England."

When he was left alone, Percival sat down, and, leaning his face on both hands, gave way to the gloom which his native manliness, and the delicacy that belongs to true affection, had made him struggle not to indulge in the presence of another. Never had he so loved Helen as in that hour; never had he so intimately and intensely felt her matchless worth. The image of her unselfish, quiet, melancholy consideration for that austere, uncaressing, unsympathising relation, under whose shade her young heart must have withered, seemed to him filled with a celestial pathos. And he almost hated Varney that the cynic painter could have talked of it with that business-like phlegm. The evening deepened; the tranquil street grew still; the air seemed close; the solitude oppressed him; he rose abruptly, seized his hat, and went forth, slowly, and still with a heavy heart.

As he entered Piccadilly, on the broad step of that house successively

inhabited by the Duke of Queensbury and Lord Hertford,—on the step of that mansion, up which so many footsteps light with wanton pleasure have gaily trod, Percival's eye fell upon a wretched, squalid, ragged object, doubled up, as it were, in that last despondency which has ceased to beg, that has no care to steal, that has no wish to live. Percival halted, and touched the outcast.

"What is the matter, my poor fellow? Take care—the policeman will not suffer you to rest here. Come, cheer up, I say! There is something to find you a better lodging!"

The silver fell unheeded on the stones. The thing of rags did not even raise its head, but a low broken voice, muttered—

"It be too late now—let 'em take me to prison—let 'em send me 'cross the sea to Buttany—let 'em hang me, if they please. I be's good for nothin' now—nothin'!"

Altered as the voice was, it struck Percival as familiar. He looked down and caught a view of the drooping face.

"Up, man, up!" he said, cheerily; "see, Providence sends you an old friend in need, to teach you never to despair again."

The hearty accent, more than the words, touched and aroused the poor creature. He rose mechanically, and a sickly grateful smile passed over his wasted features, as he recognised St. John.

"Come! how is this? I have always understood that to keep a crossing was a flourishing trade now-a-days."

"I 'as no crossin'. I 'as sold her!" groaned Beck. "I be's good for nothin' now, but to cadge about the streets, and steal, and fitch, and hang like the rest on us! Thank you, kindly, sir," (and Beck pulled his

forelock.) "but, please your honor, I would rather make an ind on it!"

"Pooh, pooh! didn't I tell you when you wanted a friend to come to me? Why did you doubt me, foolish fellow? Pick up those shillings—get a bed and a supper. Come and see me to-morrow at nine o'clock; you know where—the same house in Curzon-street; you shall tell me then your whole story, and it shall go hard but I'll buy you another crossing, or get you something just as good."

Poor Beck swayed a moment or two on his slender legs, like a drunken man, and then suddenly falling on his knees, he kissed the hem of his benefactor's garment, and fairly wept. Those tears relieved him—they seemed to wash the drought of despair from his heart.

"Hush, hush! or we shall have a crowd round us. You'll not forget, my poor friend, No. —, Curzon-street—nine to-morrow. Make haste, now, and get food and rest—you look, indeed, as if you wanted them. Ah! would to Heaven all the poverty in this huge city stood here in thy person, and we could aid it as easily as I can thee!"

Percival had moved on as he said those last words, and, looking back, he had the satisfaction to see that Beck was slowly crawling after him, and had escaped the grim question of a very portly policeman, who had no doubt expressed a natural indignation at the audacity of so ragged a skeleton not keeping itself respectably at home in its churchyard.

Entering one of the clubs in St. James's-street, Percival found a small knot of politicians in eager conversation respecting a new book which had been published but a day or two before, but which had already seized the public attention with that strong grasp which constitutes always an era in an author's life, sometimes an epoch in a nation's literature. The

newspapers were full of extracts from the work—the gossips of conjecture as to the authorship. We need scarcely say that a book which makes this kind of sensation, must hit some popular feeling of the hour, supply some popular want. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, therefore, its character is political: it was so in the present instance. It may be remembered that that year Parliament sat during great part of the month of October, that it was the year in which the Reform Bill was rejected by the House of Lords, and that public feeling in our time had never been so keenly excited. This work appeared during the short interval between the rejection of the Bill and the prorogation of Parliament.* And what made it more remarkable, was that while stamped with the passion of the time, there was a weight of calm and stern reasoning, embodied in its vigorous periods, which gave to the arguments of the advocate something of the impartiality of the judge. Unusually abstracted and unsocial, for, despite his youth and that peculiar bashfulness before noticed, he was generally alive enough to all that passed around him, Percival paid little attention to the comments that circulated round the easy chairs in his vicinity, till a subordinate in the administration, with whom he was slightly acquainted, pushed a small volume towards him, and said:

"You have seen this, of course, St. John? Ten to one you do not guess the author. It is certainly not B—m, though the Lord Chancellor has energy enough for anything. R— says it has a touch of S—r."

"Could M—y have written it?" asked a young member of Parliament, timidly.

"M—y!—very like his match-

less style, to be sure! You can have read very little of M—y, I should think," said the subordinate, with the true sneer of an official and a critic.

The young member could have slunk into a nutshell.

Percival, with very languid interest, glanced over the volume. But despite his mood, and his moderate affection for political writings, the passage he opened upon struck and seized him unawares. Though the sneer of the official was just, and the style was not comparable to M—y's, (whose is?) still the steady rush of strong words, strong with strong thoughts—heaped massively together—showed the ease of genius and the gravity of thought:—the absence of all effeminate glitter—the iron grapple with the pith and substance of the argument opposed, seemed familiar to Percival. He thought he heard the deep bass of John Ardworth's earnest voice, when some truth roused his advocacy, or some falsehood provoked his wrath. He put down the book, bewildered. Could it be the obscure briefless lawyer in Gray's Inn, (that very morning the object of his young pity,) who was thus lifted into fame? He smiled at his own credulity. But he listened with more attention to the enthusiastic praises that circled round, and the various guesses which accompanied them. Soon, however, his former gloom returned—the Babel began to chafe and weary him. He rose and went forth again into the air. He strolled on without purpose, but mechanically, into the street where he had first seen Helen. He paused a few moments under the colonnade which faced Beck's old deserted crossing. His pause attracted the notice of one of the unhappy beings whom we suffer to pollute our streets and rot in our hospitals. She approached and spoke to him—to *him* whose heart was so full of Helen! He

* Parliament was prorogued October 20th; the bill rejected by the Lords, October 8th.
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shuddered, and strode on. At length, he paused before the twin towers of Westminster Abbey, on which the moon rested in solemn splendour; and in that space, one man only shared his solitude. A figure with folded arms leant against the iron rails, near the statue of Canning, and his gaze comprehended in one view, the walls of the Parliament, in which all passions wage their war, and the glorious abbey, which gives a Walballa to the great. The utter stillness of the figure so in unison with the stillness of the scene, had upon Percival more effect than would have been produced by the most clamorous crowd. He looked round curiously, as he passed, and uttered an exclamation, as he recognised John Ardworth.

"You, Percival!" said Ardworth—"a strange meeting-place at this hour! What can bring you hither?"

"Only whim, I fear—and you?" as Percival linked his arm into Ardworth's.

"Twenty years hence I will tell you what brought me hither!" answered Ardworth, moving slowly back towards Whitehall.

"If we are alive then!"

"We live till our destinies below are fulfilled; till our uses have passed from us in this sphere, and rise to benefit another. For the soul is as a sun, but with this noble distinction, the sun is confined in its career—day after day, it visits the same lands, gilds the same planets, or rather, as the astronomers hold, stands the motionless centre of moving worlds. But the soul, when it sinks into seeming darkness and the deep, rises to new destinies, fresh regions unvisited before. What we call Eternity, may be but an endless series of those transitions, which men call *deaths*, abandonments of home after home, ever to fairer scenes and loftier heights. Age after age, the spirit, that glorious Nomad, may shift its tent, fated not

to rest in the dull Elysium of the Heathen, but carrying with it evermore its elements,—Activity and Desire. Why should the soul ever repose? God, its Principle, reposes never. While we speak, new worlds are sparkling forth—suns are throwing off their nebulae—nebulae are hardening into worlds. The Almighty proves his existence by creating. Think you that Plato is at rest, and Shakspeare only basking on a sun-cloud? Labour is the very essence of spirit as of divinity: labour is the purgatory of the erring; it may become the hell of the wicked, but labour is not less the heaven of the good!"

Ardworth spoke with unusual earnestness and passion; and his idea of the future was emblematic of his own active nature: for each of us is wisely left to shape out, amidst the impenetrable mists, his own ideal of the Hereafter. The warrior child of the biting north placed his Hela amid snows, and his Himmel in the banquets of victorious war; the son of the East, parched by relentless summer—his hell amidst fire, and his elysium by cooling streams; the weary peasant sighs through life for rest, and rest awaits his vision beyond the grave; the workman of genius—ever ardent, ever young—honours toil as the glorious development of being—and springs refreshed over the abyss of the grave—to follow, from star to star, the progress that seems to him at once the supreme felicity and the necessary law. So be it with the fantasy of each! Wisdom that is infallible, and love that never sleeps, watch over the darkness—and bid darkness be, that we may dream!

"Alas!" said the young listener—"what reproof do you not convey to those, like me, who, devoid of the power which gives results to every toil, have little left to them in life, but to idle life away. All have not

the gift to write, or harangue, or speculate, or——”

“Friend,” interrupted Ardworth, bluntly; “do not belie yourself. There lives not a man on earth—out of a lunatic asylum—who has not in him the power to do good. What can writers, haranguers, or speculators do more than that? Have you ever entered a cottage—ever travelled in a coach—ever talked with a peasant in the field, or loitered with a mechanic at the loom, and not found that each of those men had a talent you had not, knew some things you knew not? The most useless creature that ever yawned at a club, or counted the vermin on his rags under the suns of Calabria, has no excuse for want of intellect. What men want is, not talent, it is purpose;—in other words, not the power to achieve, but the will to labour. You, Percival Saint John—you affect to despond, lest you should not have your uses—you with that fresh warm heart—you with that pure enthusiasm for what is fresh and good—you, who can even admire a thing like Varney, because, through the tawdry man, you recognise art and skill, even though wasted in spoiling canvas—you, who have only to live as you feel, in order to diffuse blessings all around you,—fie, foolish boy!—you will own your error when I tell you why I come from my rooms at Gray’s Inn to see the walls in which Hampden, a plain country squire like you, shook with plain words the tyranny of eight hundred years.”

“Ardworth, I will not wait your time to tell me what took you yonder. I have penetrated a secret that you, not kindly, kept from me. This morning you rose and found yourself famous; this evening you have come to gaze upon the scene of the career to which that fame will more rapidly conduct you——”

“And upon the tomb which the proudest ambition I can form on earth

must content itself to win! A poor conclusion, if all ended here!”

“I am right, however,” said Percival, with boyish pleasure. “It is you whose praises have just filled my ears. You, dear—dear Ardworth! How rejoiced I am!”

Ardworth pressed heartily the hand extended to him: “I should have trusted you with my secret to-morrow, Percival; as it is, keep it for the present. A craving of my nature has been satisfied, a grief has found distraction; as for the rest, any child who throws a stone into the water with all his force can make a splash; but he would be a fool, indeed, if he supposed that the splash was a sign that he had turned a stream.”

Here Ardworth ceased abruptly—and Percival, engrossed by a bright idea, which had suddenly occurred to him, exclaimed—

“Ardworth—your desire, your ambition, is to enter parliament; there must be a dissolution shortly—the success of your book will render you acceptable to many a popular constituency. All you can want is a sum for the necessary expenses. Borrow that sum from me—repay me when you are in the cabinet, or attorney-general. It shall be so!”

A look so bright, that even by that dull lamplight, the glow of the cheek, the brilliancy of the eye were visible—flashed over Ardworth’s face. He felt at that moment what ambitious man must feel when the object he has seen dimly and afar—is placed within his grasp; but his reason was proof even against that strong temptation.

He passed his arm round the boy’s slender waist, and drew him to his heart, with grateful affection, as he replied,

“And what, if now in parliament, giving up my career—with no regular means of subsistence—what could I be, but a venal adventurer? Place would become so vitally necessary in

me, that I should feed but a dangerous war between my conscience and my wants. In chasing *Fame*, the shadow, I should lose the substance, *Independence*,—why, that very thought would paralyse my tongue. No, no—my generous friend. As labour is the arch elevator of man, so patience is the essence of labour. First let me build the foundation, I may then calculate the height of my tower. First let me be independent of the great—I will then be the champion of the lowly. Hold!—tempt me no more—do not lure me to the loss of self-esteem! And now Percival,” resumed Ardworth, in the tone of one who wishes to plunge into some utterly new current of thought—“let us forget for awhile these solemn aspirations, and be frolicsome and human. ‘*Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.*’ ‘*Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo.*’ What say you to a cigar?”

Percival stared. He was not yet familiarised to the eccentric whims of his friend!

“Hot negus and a cigar!” repeated Ardworth, while a smile, full of drollery, played round the corners of his lips, and twinkled in his deep-set eyes.

“Are you serious?”

“Not serious—I have been serious enough,” (and Ardworth sighed,

for the last three weeks. Who goes ‘to Corinth to be sage, or to the Cider Cellar to be serious?’”

“I subscribe, then, to the negus and cigar,” said Percival, smiling; and he had no cause to repent his compliance, as he accompanied Ardworth to one of the resorts favoured by that strange person in his rare hours of relaxation.

For, seated at his favourite table, which happened, luckily, to be vacant, with his head thrown carelessly back, and his negus steaming before him, John Ardworth continued to pour forth, till the clock struck three, jest upon jest—pun upon pun—broad drollery upon broad drollery, without flagging, without intermission—so varied, so copious, so ready, so irresistible, that Percival was transported out of all his melancholy, in enjoying, for the first time in his life, the exuberant gaiety of a grave mind once set free—all its intellect sparkling into wit—all its passion rushing into humour. And this was the man he had pitied!—supposed to have no sunny side to his life! How much greater had been his compassion and his wonder, if he could have known all that had passed, within the last few weeks, through that gloomy, yet silent breast, which, by the very breadth of its mirth, showed what must be the depth of its sadness!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LOSS OF THE CROSSING.

DESPITE the lateness of the hour before he got to rest, Percival had already breakfasted, when his valet informed him, with raised supercilious eyebrows, that "an uncommon ragged sort of a person insisted that he had been told to call." Though Beck had been at the house before, and the valet had admitted him—so much thinner, so much more ragged was he now, that the trim servant—no close observer of such folks—did not recognise him. However, at Percival's order, too well bred to show surprise, he ushered Beck up with much civility; and St. John was painfully struck with the ravages a few weeks had made upon the sweeper's countenance. The lines were so deeply ploughed—the dry hair looked so thin, and was so sown with gray, that Beck might have beat all Farren's skill in the part of an old man.

The poor Sweeper's tale, extricated from its peculiar phraseology, was simple enough, and soon told:—He had returned home at night to find his boards stolen, and the labour of his life overthrown. How he passed that night he did not very well remember. We may well suppose that the little reason he possessed was well nigh bereft from him. No suspicion of the exact thief crossed his perturbed mind. Bad as Grabman's character might be, he held a respectable position compared with the other lodgers in the house. Bill, the cracksman, naturally, and by vocation, suggested the hand that had despoiled him;—how hope for redress, or extort surrender, from

such a quarter! Mechanically, however, when the hour arrived to return to his day's task, he stole down the stairs, and lo, at the very door of the house, Bill's children were at play, and in the hand of the eldest he recognised what he called his "curril."

"Your curril?" interrupted St. John.

"Yes, curril—vot the little uns bite, afore they gets their teetbin'."

St. John smiled, and supposing that Beck had some time or other been puerile enough to purchase such a bauble, nodded to him to continue;—To seize upon the urchin, and, in spite of kicks, bites, shrieks, or scratches, repossess himself of his treasure, was the feat of a moment. The brat's clamour drew out the father—and to him Beck, pocketing the coral, that its golden bells might not attract the more experienced eye, and influence the more formidable greediness, of the paternal thief,) loudly, and at first fearlessly, appealed. Him he charged, and accused, and threatened with all vengeance, human and Divine. Then changing his tone, he implored—he wept—he knelt. As soon as the startled cracksman recovered his astonishment at such audacity, and comprehended the nature of the charge against himself and his family, he felt the more indignant from a strange and unfamiliar consciousness of innocence. Seizing Beck by the nape of the neck, with a dexterous application of hand and foot, he sent him spinning into the kennel.

"Go to Jericho, mud-scraper!"

cried Bill, in a voice of thunder—"and if ever thou sayst such a vopper agin—'sparing the characters of them ere motherless babes—I'll seal thee up in a 'tato sack, and sell thee for fiv'pence to No. 7, the great body-snatcher. Take care how I ever sets eyes agin on thy h-ugly mug!"

With that Bill clapped-to the door, and Beck, frightened out of his wits, crawled from the kennel, and, bruised and smarting, crept to his crossing. But he was unable to discharge his duties that day; his ill-fed, miserable frame was too weak for the stroke he had received. Long before dusk, he sneaked away, and, dreading to return to his lodging; lest, since nothing now was left worth robbing but his carcass, Bill might keep his word, and sell *that* to the body-snatcher, he took refuge under the only roof where he felt he could sleep in safety.

And here we must pause to explain. In our first introduction of Beck, we contented ourselves with implying to the ingenious and practised reader, that his heart might still be large enough to hold something besides his crossing. Now, in one of the small alleys that have their vent in the great stream of Fleet-street, there dwelt an old widow-woman, who eked out her existence by charing—an industrious, drudging creature, whose sole occupation since her husband, the journeyman bricklayer, fell from a scaffold, and, breaking his neck, left her happily childless, as well as penniless—had been scrubbing stone-floors, and cleaning out dingy houses when about to be let,—charing, in a word. And in this vocation had she kept body and soul together, till a bad rheumatism and old age had put an end to her utilities, and entitled her to the receipt of two shillings weekly from parochial munificence. Between this old woman and Beck there was a mysterious tie—so mys-

terious that he did not well comprehend it himself. Sometimes he called her "mammy"—sometimes "the h-old crittur." But certain it is, that to her he was indebted for that name which he bore, to the puzzlement of St. Giles's.

Becky Carruthers was the name of the old woman; but Becky was one of those good creatures who are always called by their Christian names, and never rise into the importance of the surname, and the dignity of "Mistress;"—lopping off the last syllable of the familiar appellation, the outcast christened himself "Beck."

"And," said St. John, who in the course of question and answer had got thus far into the marrow of the Sweeper's narrative, "is not this good woman really your mother?"

"Mother!" echoed Beck, with disdain; "no, I 'as a gritter mother nor she. Sint Poll's is my mother. But the h-old crittur tuk care on me."

"I really don't understand you. Saint Paul's is your mother!—How?"

Beck shook his head mysteriously, and without answering the question, resumed the tale, which we must thus paraphrastically continue to deliver.

When he was a little more than six years old, Beck began to earn his own livelihood, by running errands, holding horses, seraping together pence and half-pence. Betimes, his passion for saving began; at first with a good and unselfish motive, that of surprising "mammy" at the week's end. But when "mammy," who then gained enough for herself, patted his head and called him good boy, and bade him save for his own uses, and told him what a great thing it would be if he could lay by a pretty penny against he was a man, he turned miser on his own account; and the miserable luxury grew upon

him. At last, by the permission of the police inspector, strengthened by that of the owner of the contiguous house, he made his great step in life, and succeeded a deceased negro in the dignity and emoluments of the memorable crossing. From that hour he felt himself fulfilling his proper destiny; but poor Becky, alas, had already fallen into the sere and yellow leaf! with her decline, her good qualities were impaired. She took to drinking—not to positive intoxication, but to making herself “comfortable;”—and, to satisfy her craving, Beck, waking betimes one morning, saw her emptying his pockets. Then he resolved, quietly and without upbraiding her, to remove to a safer lodging. To save had become the imperative necessity of his existence. But to do him justice, Beck had a glimmering sense of what was due to the “h-old crittur.” Every Saturday evening, he called at her house, and deposited with her a certain sum, not large even in proportion to his earnings, but which seemed to the poor ignorant miser, who grudged every farthing to himself, an enormous deduction from his total, and a sum sufficient for every possible want of humankind even to satiety. And now, in returning, despoiled of all, save the few pence he had collected that day, it is but fair to him to add that not his least bitter pang was in the remembrance that this was the only Saturday on which, for the first time, the weekly stipend would fail.

But so ill and so wretched did he look when he reached her little room, that “mammy” forgot all thought of herself; and when he had told his tale, so kind was her comforting, so unselfish her sympathy, that his heart smote him for his old parsimony, for his hard resentment at her single act of peculation;—had not she the right to all he made? But remorse and grief alike soon vanished in the fever

that now seized him; for several days he was insensible: and when he recovered sufficiently to be aware of what was around him, he saw the widow seated beside him, within four bare walls,—everything, except the bed he slept on, had been sold to support him in his illness. As soon as he could totter forth, Beck hastened to his crossing—alas, it was preoccupied! His absence had led to ambitious usurpation. A one-legged, sturdy sailor had mounted his throne, and wielded his sceptre. The decorum of the street forbade altercation to the contending parties; but the sailor referred discussion to a meeting at a flash house in the Rookery that evening. There, a jury was appointed, and the case opened. By the conventional laws that regulate this useful community, Beck was still in his rights; his reappearance sufficed to restore his claims, and an appeal to the policeman would no doubt re-establish his authority. But Beck was still so ill and so feeble, that he had a melancholy persuasion that he could not suitably perform the duties of his office; and when the sailor, not a bad fellow on the whole, offered to pay down on the nail what really seemed a very liberal sum for Beck’s peaceful surrender of his rights, the poor wretch thought of the bare walls at his “mammy’s,” of the long, dreary interval that must elapse, even if able to work, before the furniture pawned could be redeemed by the daily profits of his post, and, with a groan, he held out his hand, and concluded the bargain. Creeping home to the “h-old crittur,” he threw the purchase-money into her lap; then, broken-hearted, and in despair, he slunk forth again in a sort of vague, dreamy hope, that the law, which abhors vagabonds, would seize and finish him.

When this tale was done, Percival did not neglect the gentle task of

admonition, which the poor Sweeper's softened heart and dull remorse made the easier. He pointed out, in soft tones, how the avarice he had indulged had been, perhaps, mercifully chastised; and drew no ineloquent picture of the vicious miseries of the confirmed miser. Beck listened humbly and respectfully, though so little did he understand of mercy, and Providence, and vice, that the diviner part of the homily was quite lost on him. However, he confessed penitently that "the mattress had made him worse nor a beast to the b-old crittur;" and that "he was cured of saving to the end of his days."

"And now," said Percival, "as you really seem not strong enough to bear this out-of-door work, (the winter coming on, too,) what say you to entering into my service? I want some help in my stables. The work is easy enough; and you are used to horses, you know, in a sort of a way."

Beck hesitated, and looked a moment undecided. At last, he said, "Please your 'onor, if I beant strong enough for the crossin', I'se afeard I'm too h-ailing to sarve you. And wouldn't I be worse nor a wiper, to take your vages, and not work for 'em h-as I h-ought?"

"Pooh, we'll soon make you strong, my man. Take my advice—don't let your head run on the crossin'. That kind of industry exposes you to bad company and bad thoughts."

"That's vot it is, sir," said Beck, assentingly, laying his dexter forefinger on his sinister palm.

"Well! you are in my service, then. Go down stairs now, and get your breakfast;—by and by, you shall show me your 'mammy's' house, and we'll see what can be done for her."

Beck pressed his hands to his eyes, trying hard not to cry; but it was too much for him; and as the valet, who appeared to Percival's summons, led him down the stairs, his sobs were heard from attic to basement.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEWS FROM GRAEMAN.

THAT day, opening thus auspiciously to Beck, was memorable also to other and more prominent persons in this history.

Early in the forenoon a parcel was brought to Madame Dalibard which contained Ardworth's already famous book, a goodly assortment of extracts from the newspapers thereon, and the following letter from the young author:

"You will see, by the accompanying packet, that your counsels have had weight with me. I have turned aside in my slow legitimate career. I have, as you desired, made 'men talk of me.' What solid benefit I may reap from this, I know not. I shall not openly avow the book. Such notoriety cannot help me at the bar. But *liberavi animam meam*—excuse my pedantry—I have let my soul free for a moment—I am now catching it back, to put bit and saddle on again. I will not tell you how you have disturbed me—how you have stung me into this premature rush amidst the crowd—how, after robbing me of name and father, you have driven me to this experiment with my own mind, to see if I was deceived, when I groined to myself, 'The Public shall give you a name, and Fame shall be your mother.' I am satisfied with the experiment. I know better now what is in me: and I have regained my peace of mind. If, in the success of this hasty work, there be that which will gratify the interest you so kindly take in me, deem that success your own: I owe it to you—to your

revelations—to your admonitions. I wait patiently your own time for further disclosures; till then, the wheel must work on, and the grist be ground. Kind and generous friend, till now I would not wound you by returning the sum you sent me—nay, more, I knew I should please you by devoting part of it to the risk of giving this essay to the world, and so making its good fortune doubly your own work. Now, when the publisher smiles, and the shopmen bow, and I am acknowledged to have a bank in my brains,—*now*, you cannot be offended to receive it back. Adieu. When my mind is in train again, and I feel my step firm on the old dull road, I will come to see you. Till then, yours—by what name? Open the 'Biographical Dictionary,' at hazard, and send me one."

"Gray's Inn."

Not at the noble thoughts, and the deep sympathy with mankind, that glowed through that work, over which Lucretia now tremulously hurried, did she feel delight. All that she recognised or desired to recognise, were those evidences of that kind of intellect which wins its way through the world, and which, strong and unimistakeable, rose up in every page of that vigorous logic and commanding style. The book was soon dropped thus read: the newspaper extracts pleased even more.

"This," she said, audibly, in the freedom of her solitude—"this is the son I asked for—a son in whom I can rise—in whom I can exchange the sense of crushing infamy for the old

delicious ecstacy of pride! For this son can I do too much! No; in what I may do for him, methinks there will be no remorse! And he calls his success mine—mine!" Her nostrils dilated, and her front rose erect.

In the midst of this exultation, Varney found her, and before he could communicate the business which had brought him, he had to listen, which he did with the secret gnawing envy that every other man's success occasioned him, to her haughty self-felicitations.

He could not resist saying, with a sneer, when she paused, as if to ask his sympathy:

"All this is very fine, *belle mère*; and yet I should hardly have thought that coarse-featured, uncouth limb of the law, who seldom moves without upsetting a chair—never laughs but the panes rattle in the window—I should hardly have thought *him* the precise person to gratify your pride, or answer the family ideal of a gentleman and a St. John."

"Gabriel," said Lucretia, sternly—"you have a biting tongue, and it is folly in me to resent those privileges which our fearful connection gives you. But—this railery——"

"Come, come, I was wrong—forgive it!" interrupted Varney, who, dreading nothing else, dreaded much the rebuke of his grim step-mother.

"It is forgiven," said Lucretia, coldly, and with a slight waive of her hand; then she added, with composure:

"Long since—even while heiress of Loughton—I was wrong with mere pride in the hollow seemings of distinction. Had I not, should I have stooped to William Mainwaring? What I then respected, amidst all the degradations I have known, I respect still; talent, ambition, intellect and will. Do you think I would exchange these in a son of mine, for

the mere graces which a dancing master can sell him? Fear not? Let us give but wealth to that intellect, and the world will see no clumsiness in the movements that march to its high places, and hear no discord in the laugh that triumphs over fools! But you have some news to communicate, or some proposal to suggest."

"I have both," said Varney. "In the first place, I have a letter from Grabman!"

Lucretia's eyes sparkled, and she snatched eagerly at the letter her son-in-law drew forth.

"Liverpool, October, 1831.

"Jason,—I think I am on the road to success. Having first possessed myself of the fact, commemorated in the parish register, of the birth and baptism of Alfred Braddell's son, for we must proceed regularly in these matters, I next set my wits to work, to trace that son's exodus from the paternal mansion. I have hunted up an old woman-servant, Jane Prior, who lived with the Braddells. She now thrives as a laundress; she is a rank puritan, and starches for the godly. She was at first very wary and reserved in her communications, but by siding with her prejudices and humours, and by the intercession of the Rev. Mr. Graves, (of her own persuasion,) I have got her to open her lips. It seems that these Braddells lived very unhappily—the husband, a pious dissenter, had married a lady who turned out of a very different practice and belief. Jane Prior pitied her master, and detested her mistress. Some circumstances in the conduct of Mrs. Braddell made the husband, who was then in his last illness, resolve, from a point of conscience, to save his child from what he deemed the contamination of her precepts and example. Mrs. Braddell was absent from Liverpool, on a visit, which was thought very unfeeling by the hus-

band's friends; during this time Braddell was visited constantly by a gentleman (Mr. Ardworth), who differed from him greatly in some things, and seemed one of the carnal; but with whom agreement in politics (for they were both great politicians and republicans) seems to have established a link. One evening, when Mr. Ardworth was in the house, Jane Prior, who was the only maid servant, (for they kept but two, and one had been just discharged,) had been sent out to the apothecary's. On her return, Jane Prior going into the nursery, missed the infant; she thought it was with her master, but coming into his room, Mr. Braddell told her to shut the door, informed her that he had entrusted the boy to Mr. Ardworth, to be brought up in a righteous and pious manner, and implored and commanded her to keep this a secret from his wife, whom he was resolved, indeed, if he lived, not to receive back into his house. Braddell, however, did not survive more than two days this event. On his death, Mrs. Braddell returned, but circumstances connected with the symptoms of his malady, and a strong impression which haunted himself, and with which he had infected Jane Prior, that he had been poisoned, led to a posthumous examination of his remains. No trace of poison was however discovered, and suspicions that had been directed against his wife, could not be substantiated by law; still, she was regarded in so unfavourable a light by all who had known them both, she met with such little kindness or sympathy in her widowhood, and had been so openly denounced by Jane Prior, that it is not to be wondered at that she left the place as soon as possible. The house, indeed, was taken from her, for Braddell's affairs were found in such confusion, and his embarrassments so great, that everything was seized, and sold off; nothing

left for the widow, nor for the child (if the last were ever discovered).

"As may be supposed, Mrs. Braddell was at first very clamorous for the lost child, but Jane Prior kept her promise, and withheld all clue to it. And Mrs. Braddell was forced to quit the place, in ignorance what had become of it; since then no one had heard of her, but Jane Prior says that she is sure 'she had come to no good.' Now, though much of this may be, no doubt, familiar to you, dear Jason, it is right, when I put the evidence before you, that you should know and guard against what to expect: and in any trial at law to prove the identity of Vincent Braddell, Jane Prior must be a principal witness, and will certainly not spare poor Mrs. Braddell. For the main point, however, viz., the suspicion of poisoning her husband, the inquest and verdict may set aside all alarm.

"My next researches have been directed on the track of Walter Ardworth, after leaving Liverpool, which (I find by the books at the inn where he lodged and was known) he did in debt to the innkeeper, the very night he received the charge of the child. Here, as yet, I am in fault; but I have ascertained that a woman, one of the sect, of the name of Joplin, living in a village fifteen miles from the town, had the care of some infant, to replace her own, which she had lost. I am going to this village tomorrow. But I cannot expect much in that quarter, since it would seem at variance with your more probable belief that Walter Ardworth took the child at once to Mr. Fielden's. However, you see I have already gone very far in the evidence;—the birth of the child—the delivery of the child to Ardworth. I see a very pretty case already before us, and I do not now doubt for a moment of ultimate success.

"Yours, N. GRABMAN."

Lucretia read steadily, and with no change of countenance, to the last line of the letter. Then, as she put it down on the table before her, she repeated, with a tone of deep exultation—"No doubt of ultimate success!"

"You do not fear to brave all which the spite of this woman, Jane Prior, may prompt her to say against you?" asked Varney.

Lucretia's brow fell. "It is another torture," she said, "even to own my marriage with a low-born hypocrite. But I can endure it for the cause," she added, more haughtily. "Nothing can really hurt me in these obsolete aspersions, and this vague scandal. The inquest acquitted me, and the world will be charitable to the mother of him who has wealth and rank, and that vigorous genius which, if proved in obscurity, shall command opinion in renown."

"You are now, then, disposed at once to proceed to action. For Helen, all is prepared—the insurances settled—the trust for which I hold them on your behalf is signed and completed. But for Percival St. John, I await your directions. Will it be best first to prove your son's identity, or when morally satisfied that that proof is forthcoming, to remove betimes *both* the barriers to his inheritance. If we tarry for the last, the removal of St. John becomes more suspicious than it does at a time when you have no visible interest in his death. Besides, now we have the occasion, or can make it—can we tell how long it will last? Again, it will seem more natural that the lover should break his heart in the first shock of——"

"Ay," interrupted Lucretia, "I would have all thought and contemplation of crime at an end; when,

clasping my boy to my heart, I can say—'Your mother's inheritance is yours.' I would not have a murder before my eyes, when they should look only on the fair prospects beyond. I would cast back all the hideous images of horror into the rear of memory, so that hope may for once visit me again undisturbed. No, Gabriel, were I to speak for ever, you would comprehend not what I grasp at in a son! It is at a future! Rolling a stone over the sepulchre of the past—it is as a resurrection into a fresh world—it is to know again one emotion not impure—one scheme not criminal. It is, in a word, to cease to be as myself, to think in another soul, to hear my heart beat in another form. All this I covet in a son. And when all this should smile before me in his image, shall I be plucked back again into my hell, by the consciousness that a new crime is to be done? No; wade quickly through the passage of blood, that we may dry our garments, and breathe the air, upon the bank where sun shines and flowers bloom!"

"So be it, then!" said Varney. "Before the week is out, I must be under the same roof as St. John.—Before the week is out, why not all meet in the old halls of Laughton?"

"Ay, in the halls of Laughton! on the hearth of our ancestors the deeds done for our descendants look less dark!"

"And first, to prepare the way, Helen should sicken in these fogs of London, and want change of air."

"Place before me that desk. I will read William Mainwaring's letters again and again, till from every shadow in the past a voice comes forth—'The child of your rival, your betrayer, your undoer, stands between the daylight and your son!'"

CHAPTER XV.

VARIETIES.

LEAVING the guilty pair to concert their schemes, and indulge their atrocious hopes, we accompany Percival to the hovel occupied by Becky Carruthers.

On following Beck into the room she rented, Percival was greatly surprised to find, seated comfortably on the only chair to be seen, no less a person than the worthy Mrs. Mivers. This good lady, in her spinster days, had earned her own bread by hard work. She had captivated Mr. Mivers when but a simple housemaid in the service of one of his relations. And while this humble condition in her earlier life may account for much in her language and manners which is now-a-days inconsonant with the breeding and education that characterise the wives of opulent tradesmen, so perhaps the remembrance of it made her unusually susceptible to the duties of charity. For there is no class of society more prone to pity and relieve the poor, than females in domestic service; and this virtue Mrs. Mivers had not laid aside, as many do, so soon as she was in a condition to practise it with effect. Mrs. Mivers blushed scarlet on being detected in her visit of kindness, and hastened to excuse herself by the information that she belonged to a society of ladies for "the Bettering the Condition of the Poor," and that having just been informed of Mrs. Becky's destitute state, she had looked in to recommend her—a ventilator!

"It's quite shocking to see how little the poor attends to the proper ventilating their houses. No wonder

there's so much typus about!" said Mrs. Mivers. "And for one-and-sixpence, we can introduce a stream of hair that goes up the chimney, and carries away all that it finds!"

"I 'umblly thank yon, marm," said the poor bundle of rags that went by the name of 'Becky,' as, with some difficulty, she contrived to stand in the presence of the benevolent visitor; "but, I'm much afeard, that the hair will make the rheumatiz werry rum-patious!"

"On the contrary—on the contrary," said Mrs. Mivers triumphantly, and she proceeded philosophically to explain, that all the fevers, aches, pains, and physical ills that harass the poor, arise from the want of an air-trap in the chimney, and a perforated net-work in the window-pane. Becky listened patiently; for Mrs. Mivers was only a philosopher in her talk, and she had proved herself anything but a philosopher in her actions, by the spontaneous present of five shillings, and the promise of a basket of victuals, and some good wine to keep the cold wind she invited to the apartment out of the stomach.

Percival imitated the silence of Becky, whose spirit was so bowed down by an existence of drudgery, that not even the sight of her foster-son could draw her attention from the respect due to a superior.

"And is this poor cranky-looking cretur your son, Mrs. Becky?" said the visitor, struck at last by the appearance of the ex-Sweeper as he stood at the threshold, hat in hand.

"No, indeed, marm," answered Becky; "I often says—says I—'child, you be the son of Sint Poll's.'"

Beck smiled proudly.

"It was agin the grit church, marm—but it's a long story. My poor good man had not a long been dead—as good a man as h-ever lived, marm," and Becky dropped a curtsy; "he fell off a scaffol, and pitched right on his 'ead—or I should not have come on the parish, marm—and that's the truth on't!"

"Very well, I shall call and hear all about it—a sad case, I dare say. You see, your husband should have subscribed to our Loan Society, and then they'd have found him a 'andsome coffin, and given three pounds to his widder. But the poor are so benighted in these parts. I'm sure, sir, I can't guess what brought you here?—but that's no business of mine. And how are all at Old Brompton?"—here Mrs. Mivers bridled indignantly. "There was a time when Miss Mainwaring was very glad to come and chat with Mr. M and myself; but now 'rum has riz,' as the saying is—not but what I dare say it's not her fault, poor thing!—that stiff aunt of her's—*she* need not look so high—pride and poverty, forsooth!"

While delivering these conciliatory sentences, Mrs. Mivers had gathered up her gown, and was evidently in the bustle of departure. As she now nodded to Becky, Percival stepped up, and, with his irresistible smile, offered her his arm. Much surprised, and much flattered, Mrs. Mivers accepted it. As she did so, he gently detained her, while he said to Becky:

"My good friend, I have brought you the poor lad, to whom you have been a mother, to tell you that good deeds find their reward sooner or later. As for him, make yourself easy; he will inform you of the new

step he has taken; and for you, good, kind-hearted creature, thank the boy you brought up, if your old age shall be made easy and cheerful. Now Beck, silly lad, go and tell all to your nurse! Take care of this step, Mrs. Mivers."

As soon as he was in the street, Percival, who, if amused at the ventilator, had seen the five shillings gleam on Becky's palm, and felt that he had found under the puce-coloured gown a good woman's heart to understand him, gave Mrs. Mivers a short sketch of poor Beck's history and misfortunes, and so contrived to interest her in behalf of the nurse, that she willingly promised to become Percival's almoner, to execute his commission, to improve the interior of Becky's abode, and distribute weekly the liberal stipend he proposed to settle on the old widow. They had grown, indeed, quite friendly and intimate, by the time he reached the smart plate-glazed mahogany-coloured *fiçade*, within which the flourishing business of Mr. Mivers was carried on; and when, knocking at the private door, promptly opened by a lemon-coloured page, she invited him up stairs, it so chanced that the conversation had slid off to Helen, and Percival was sufficiently interested to bow assent, and to enter.

Though all the way up the stairs, Mrs. Mivers, turning back at every other step, did her best to impress upon her young visitor's mind the important fact, that they kept their household establishment at their 'willor,' and that their apartments in Fleet-street were only a 'convenience'—the store set by the worthy housewife upon her goods and chattels was sufficiently visible in the drugget that threaded its narrow way up the gay Brussels stair-carpet, and in certain layers of paper, which protected from the profanation of immediate touch, the mahogany hand-rail.

And nothing could exceed the fostering care exhibited in the drawing-room, when, the door thrown open, admitted a view of its damask moreen curtains, pinned back from such impertinent sunbeams as could force their way through the foggy air of the east into the windows, and the ells of yellow muslin that guarded the frames, at least, of a collection of coloured prints, and two kit-kat portraits of Mr. Mivers and his lady, from the perambulations of the flies.

But Percival's view of this interior was somewhat impeded by his portly guide, who, uttering a little exclamation of surprise, stood motionless on the threshold, as she perceived Mr. Mivers seated by the hearth in close conference with a gentleman whom she had never seen before. At that hour, it was so rare an event in the life of Mr. Mivers to be found in the drawing-room, and that he should have an acquaintance unknown to his helpmate, was a circumstance so much rarer still, that Mrs. Mivers may well be forgiven for keeping St. John standing at the door till she had recovered her amaze.

Meanwhile, Mr. Mivers rose in some confusion, and was apparently about to introduce his guest, when that gentleman coughed and pinched the host's arm significantly. Mr. Mivers coughed also, and stammered out—"A gentleman, Mrs. M.—a friend;—stay with us a day or two. Much honoured—hum!"

Mrs. Mivers stared and curtsied, and stared again. But there was an open, good-humoured smile in the face of the visitor, as he advanced and took her hand, that attracted a heart very easily conciliated. Seeing that that was no moment for further explanation, she plumped herself into a seat, and said—

"But bless us and save us, I am keeping you standing, Mr. St. John!"

"St. John!" repeated the visitor,

with a vehemence that startled Mrs. Mivers.

"Your name is St. John, sir—related to the St. Johns of Laughton!"

"Yes, indeed," answered Percival, with his shy, arch smile, "Laughton at present has no worthier owner than myself."

The gentleman made two strides to Percival, and shook him heartily by the hand.

"This is pleasant, indeed!" he exclaimed. "You must excuse my freedom; but I knew well poor old Sir Miles, and my heart warms at the sight of his representative."

Percival glanced at his new acquaintance, and on the whole was prepossessed in his favour. He seemed somewhere on the sunnier side of fifty, with that superb yellow bronze of complexion which betokens long residence under eastern skies. Deep wrinkles near the eyes, and a dark circle round them, spoke of cares and fatigue, and perhaps dissipation. But he had evidently a vigour of constitution that had borne him passably through all; his frame was wiry and nervous; his eye bright and full of life; and there was that abrupt, unsteady, mercurial restlessness in his movements and manner, which usually accompanies the man whose sanguine temperament prompts him to concede to the impulse, and who is blessed or cursed with a superabundance of energy, according as circumstance may favour or judgment correct, that equivocal gift of constitution.

Percival said something appropriate in reply to so much cordiality paid to the account of the Sir Miles whom he had never seen, and seated himself, — colouring slightly under the influence of the fixed, pleased, and earnest look still bent upon him.

Searching for something else to say, Percival asked Mrs. Mivers if she had lately seen John Ardworth.

The guest, who had just reseated

himself, turned his chair round at that question with such vivacity, that Mrs. Mivers heard it crack. Her chairs were not meant for such usage. A shade fell over her rosy countenance as she replied—

"No, indeed. (please, sir, them chairs is brittle?) No,—he is like Madam at Brompton, and seldom condescends to favour us now. It was but last Sunday we asked him to dinner. I am sure he need not turn up his nose at our roast beef and pudding!"

Here Mr. Mivers was taken with a violent fit of coughing, which drew off his wife's attention. She was afraid he had taken cold.

The stranger took out a large snuff-box, inhaled a long pinch of snuff, and said to St. John:

"This Mr. John Ardworth, a pert enough Jackanapes, I suppose—a limb of the law, eh?"

"Sir," said Percival, gravely; "John Ardworth is my particular friend. It is clear that you know very little of him."

"That's true," said the stranger—"pon my life, that's very true. But I suppose he's like all lawyers—cunning and tricky, conceited and supercilious, full of prejudice and cant, and a red-hot tory into the bargain. I know them, sir—I know them!"

"Well," answered St. John, half gaily, half angrily, "your general experience serves you very little here; for Ardworth is exactly the opposite of all you have described."

"Even in politics?"

"Why, I fear he is half a Radical—certainly more than a Whig," answered St. John, rather mournfully; for his own theories were all the other way, notwithstanding his unpatriotic forgetfulness of them, in his offer to assist Ardworth's entrance into parliament.

"I am very glad to hear it," cried

the stranger, again taking snuff "And this Madame at Brompton—perhaps I know her a little better than I do young Mr. Ardworth—Mrs. Brad—I mean Madame Dalibard"—and the stranger glanced at Mr. Mivers, who was slowly recovering from some vigorous slaps on the back, administered to him by his wife, as a counter-irritant to the cough. "Is it true that she has lost the use of her limbs?"

Percival shook his head.

"And takes care of poor Helen Mainwaring, the orphan? Well, well! that looks amiable enough. I must see—I must see!"

"Who shall I say inquired after her, when I see Madame Dalibard?" asked Percival, with some curiosity.

"Who? Oh, Mr. Tomkins. She will not recollect him, though,"—and the stranger laughed, and Mr. Mivers laughed, too; and Mrs. Mivers, who, indeed, always laughed when other people laughed, laughed also. So Percival thought he ought to laugh for the sake of good company, and all laughed together, as he arose and took leave.

He had not, however, got far from the house, on his way to his cabriolet, which he had left by Temple Bar, when, somewhat to his surprise, he found Mr. Tomkins at his elbow.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. St. John, but I have only just returned to England, and on such occasions a man is apt to seem curious. This young lawyer; you see the elder Ardworth—(a good-for-nothing scamp!)—was a sort of friend of mine—not exactly friend, indeed, for, by Jove, I think he was a worse friend to me than he was to anybody else,—still I had a foolish interest for him, and should be glad to hear something more about any one bearing his name, than I can coax out of that droll little linen draper. You are really intimate with young Ardworth, eh?"

"Intimate! poor fellow, he will not let any one be that! He works too hard to be social. But I love him sincerely; and I admire him beyond measure."

"The dog has industry, then—that's good. And does he make debts, like that rascal, Ardworth, senior?"

"Really, sir, I must say, this tone with respect to Mr. Ardworth's father——"

"What the devil, sir! Do you take the father's part, as well as the son's?"

"I don't know anything about Mr. Ardworth, senior," said Percival, pouting; "but I do know that my friend would not allow any one to speak ill of his father in his presence; and I beg you, sir, to consider, that whatever would offend him, must offend me."

"God's my life! He's the luckiest young rogue to have such a friend. Sir, I wish you a very good day."

Mr. Tomkins took off his hat—bowed—and passing St. John with a rapid step, was soon lost to his eye amongst the crowd hurrying westward.

But our business being now rather with him than Percival, we leave the latter to mount his cabriolet, and we proceed with Mr. Mivers's mercurial guest on his eccentric way through the throng.

There was an odd mixture of thoughtful abstraction and quick observation in the soliloquy in which this gentleman indulged, as he walked briskly on.

"A pretty young spark, that St. John! A look of his father, but handsomer, and less affected. I like him. Fine shop that—very! London wonderfully improved. A hookah in that window!—God bless me!—a real hookah! This is all very good news about that poor boy—very. After all, he is not to blame if his mother

was such a damnable—I must contrive to see and judge of him myself as soon as possible. Can't trust to others—too sharp for that! What an ugly dog that is, looking after me! It is certainly a bailiff. Hang it!—what do I care for bailiffs? Hem—hem!" And the gentleman thrust his hands into his pockets, and laughed, as the jingle of coin reached his ear through the din without. "Well, I must make haste to decide; for, really there is a very troublesome piece of business before me. Plague take her!—what can have become of the woman? I shall have to hunt out a sharp lawyer. But John's a lawyer himself. No—attorneys, I suppose, are the men. Gad! they were sharp enough when they had to hunt me! What's that great bill on the wall about?—'Down with the Lords.' Pooh, pooh! Master John Bull, you love Lords a great deal too much for that. A prettyish girl! English women are very good-looking, certainly. That Lucretia—what shall I do, *if*—Ah, time enough to think of her, when I have got over that mighty stiff *if*!"

In such cogitations and mental remarks our traveller whiled away the time, till he found himself in Piccadilly. There, a publisher's shop, (and he had that keen eye for shops which betrays the stranger in London,) with its new publications exposed at the window attracted his notice. Conspicuous amongst the rest was the open title-page of a book, at the foot of which was placed a placard, with the enticing words—'FOURTH EDITION: JUST OUT,' in red capitals. The title of the work struck his irritable curious fancy; he walked into the shop—asked for the volume—and while looking over the contents, with muttered ejaculations: "Good!—capital! why this reminds me of Horne Tooke! What's the price? very dear—must have it though."

must. Ha! ha! home-thrust there!"—while thus turning over the leaves, and rending them asunder with his forefinger, regardless of the paper-cutter extended to him by the shopman, a gentleman pushing by him, asked if the publisher was at home; and as the shopman, bowing very low, answered, "Yes," the new-comer darted into a little recess behind the shop. Mr. Tomkins, who had looked up very angrily on being jostled so unceremoniously, started and changed colour, when he saw the face of the offender. "Saints in heaven!" he murmured almost audibly; "what a look of that woman! and yet—no—it is gone!"

"Who is that gentleman?" he asked, abruptly, as he paid for his book.

The shopman smiled, but answered, "I don't know, sir."

"That's a lie!—you would never bow so low to a man you did not know!"

The shopman smiled again. "Why, sir, there are many who come to this house who don't wish us to know them."

"Ah, I understand! you are political publishers—afraid of libels, I dare say. Always the same thing in this cursed country, and then they tell us we are 'free!' So I suppose that gentleman has written something William Pitt does not like. But, William Pitt!—ha—he's dead!—very true, so he is! Sir, this little book seems most excellent; but, in my time, a man would have been sent to Newgate for printing it."

While thus running on, Mr. Tomkins had edged himself pretty close to the recess, within which the last comer had disappeared; and there, seated on a high stool, he contrived to read and to talk at the same time, but his eye and his ear were both turned every instant towards the recess.

The shopman, little suspecting that in so very eccentric, garrulous a person, he was permitting a spy to encroach upon the secrets of the house, continued to make up sundry parcels of the new publication which had so enchanted his customer, while he expatiated on the prodigious sensation the book had created; and while the customer himself had already caught enough of the low conversation within the recess to be aware that the author of the book was the very person who had so roused his curiosity.

Not till that gentleman, followed to the door by the polite publisher, had quitted the shop, did Mr. Tomkins put his volume in his pocket, and, with a familiar nod at the shopman, take himself off.

He was scarcely in the street, when he saw Percival St. John leaning out of his cabriolet, and conversing with the author he had discovered. He halted a moment irresolute, but the young man, in whom our reader recognises John Ardworth, declining St. John's invitation to accompany him to Brompton, resumed his way through the throng; the cabriolet drove on; and Mr. Tomkins, though with a graver mien, and a steadier step, continued his desultory rambles. Meanwhile, John Ardworth strode gloomily back to his lonely chamber.

There, throwing himself on the well-worn chair before the crowded desk, he buried his face in his hands, and for some minutes he felt all that profound despondency, peculiar to those who have won fame, to add to the dark volume of experience the conviction of fame's nothingness. For some minutes, he felt an illiberal and ungrateful envy of St. John—so fair, so light-hearted, so favoured by fortune, so rich in friends—in a mother's love, and in Helen's half-plighted troth. And he, from his very birth, cut off from the social

ties of blood—no mother's kiss to reward the toils, or gladden the sports, of childhood—no father's cheering word up the steep hill of man! And Helen, for whose sake he had so often, when his heart grew weary, nerved himself again to labour, saying—"Let me be rich, let me be great, and then I will dare to tell Helen that I love her!"—Helen smiling upon another, unconscious of his pangs! What could fame bestow in compensation? What matter that stranger- praised, and the babble of the world's running stream lingered its brief moment round the pebble in its way. In the bitterness of his mood, he was unjust to his rival. All that exquisite, but half-concealed treasure of imagination and thought, which lay beneath the surface of Helen's childlike smile, he believed that he alone—he, soul of power and son of genius, was worthy to discover and to prize. In the pride not unfrequent with that kingliest of all aristocracies, the Chiefs of Intellect, he forgot the grandeur which invests the attributes of the heart—forgot that, in the lists of love, the heart is at least the equal of the mind. In the reaction that follows great excitement, Ardworth had morbidly felt, that day, his utter solitude—felt it in the streets through which he had passed—in the home to which he had returned—the burning tears, shed for the first time since childhood, forced themselves through his clasped fingers. At length, he rose, with a strong effort at self-mastery—some contempt of his weakness, and much remorse at his ungrateful envy.

He gathered together the soiled manuscript and dingy proofs of his book, and thrust them through the grimy bars of his grate; then, opening his desk, he drew out a small packet, with tremulous fingers, unfolding paper after paper, and gazed with eyes still moistened, on the relics kept till then, in the devotion of the only *sentiment* inspired by Eros, that had ever, perhaps, softened his iron nature: These were two notes from Helen—some violets she had once given him, and a little purse she had knitted for him (with a playful prophecy of future fortunes), when he had last left the vicarage. Nor blame him, ye who with more habitual romance of temper, and richer fertility of imagination, can reconcile the tenderest memories with the sternest duties, if he, with all his strength, felt that the associations connected with those tokens would but enervate his resolves, and embitter his resignation. You can guess not the extent of the sacrifice, the bitterness of the pang, when, averting his head, he dropped those relics on the hearth. The evidence of the desultory ambition, the tokens of the visionary love—the same flame leapt up to devour both! It was as the funeral pyre of his youth!

"So!" he said to himself, "let all that can divert me from the true ends of my life—consume!—Labour, take back your son."

An hour afterwards, and his clerk, returning home, found Ardworth employed as calmly as usual on his Law Reports.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE INVITATION TO LAUGHTON.

THAT day, when he called at Brompton, Percival reported to Madame Dalibard his interview with the eccentric Mr. Tomkins. Lucretia seemed chafed and disconcerted by the inquiries with which that gentleman had honoured her, and as soon as Percival had gone, she sent for Varney. He did not come till late—she repeated to him what St. John had said of the stranger. Varney participated in her uneasy alarm. The name, indeed, was unknown to them, nor could they conjecture the bearer of so ordinary a patronymic; but there had been secrets enow in Lucretia's life, to render her apprehensive of encountering those who had known her in earlier years; and Varney feared lest any rumour reported to St. John might create his mistrust, or lessen the hold obtained upon a victim heretofore so unsuspecting. They both agreed in the expediency of withdrawing themselves and St. John, as soon as possible, from London, and frustrating Percival's chance of closer intercourse with the stranger, who had evidently aroused his curiosity.

The next day Helen was much indisposed, and the symptoms grew so grave towards the evening, that Madame Dalibard expressed alarm, and willingly suffered Percival (who had only been permitted to see Helen for a few minutes, when her lassitude was so extreme that she was obliged to retire to her room) to go in search of a physician: he returned with one of the most eminent of the faculty. On the way to

Brompton, in reply to the questions of Dr. —, Percival spoke of the dejection to which Helen was occasionally subject, and this circumstance confirmed Dr. —, after he had seen his patient, in his view of the case. In addition to some feverish and inflammatory symptoms which he trusted his prescriptions would speedily remove, he found great nervous debility, and willingly fell in with the casual suggestion of Varney, who was present, that a change of air would greatly improve Miss Mainwaring's general health, as soon as the temporary acute attack had subsided. He did not regard the present complaint very seriously, and reassured poor Percival by his cheerful mien and sanguine predictions. Percival remained at the house the whole day, and had the satisfaction, before he left, of hearing that the remedies had already abated the fever, and that Helen had fallen into a profound sleep. Walking back to town with Varney, the last said, hesitatingly—"You were saying to me, the other day, that you feared you should have to go, for a few days, both to Vernon Grange and to Laughton, as your steward wished to point out to you some extensive alterations in the management of your woods, to commence this autumn. As you were so soon coming of age, Lady Mary desired that her directions should yield to your own. Now, since Helen is recommended change of air, why not invite Madame Dalibard to visit you at one of these places? I would suggest Laughton. My poor

mother-in-law, I know, longs to revisit the scene of her youth, and you could not compliment or conciliate her more than by such an invitation."

"Oh," said Percival, joyfully, "it would realise the fondest dream of my heart to see Helen under the old roof-tree of Laughton; but as my mother is abroad, and there is therefore no lady to receive them, perhaps——"

"Why," interrupted Varney, "Madame Dalibard herself is almost the very person whom *les bienséances* might induce you to select to do the honours of your house in Lady Mary's absence; not only as kinswoman to yourself, but as the nearest surviving relative of Sir Miles—the most immediate descendant of the St. Johns; her mature years and decorum of life, her joint kindred to Helen and yourself, surely remove every appearance of impropriety."

"If she thinks so, certainly—I am no accurate judge of such formalities. You could not oblige me more, Varney, than in pre-obtaining her consent to the proposal. Helen at Laughton!—Oh, blissful thought!"

"And in what air would she be so likely to revive?" said Varney, but his voice was thick and husky.

The ideas thus presented to him, almost banished its anxiety from Percival's breast. In a thousand delightful shapes they haunted him during the sleepless night. And when, the next morning, he found that Helen was surprisingly better, he pressed his invitation upon Madame Dalibard, with a warmth that made her cheek yet more pale, and the hand, which the boy grasped as he pleaded, as cold as the dead. But she briefly consented, and Percival, allowed a brief interview with Helen, had the rapture to see her smile in a delight as childlike as his own at the news he communicated,

and listen, with swimming eyes, when he dwelt on the walks they should take together, amidst haunts to become henceforth dear to her as to himself. Fairy land dawned before them.

The visit of the physician justified Percival's heightened spirits. All the acuter symptoms had vanished already. He sanctioned his patient's departure from town as soon as Madame Dalibard's convenience would permit, and recommended only a course of restorative medicines to strengthen the nervous system, which was to commence with the following morning, and he persisted in for some weeks. He dwelt much on the effect to be derived from taking these medicines, the first thing in the day, as soon as Helen woke. Varney and Madame Dalibard exchanged a rapid glance. Charmed with the success that in this instance had attended the skill of the great physician, Percival, in his usual zealous benevolence, now eagerly pressed upon Madame Dalibard the wisdom of consulting Dr. — for her own malady; and the doctor, putting on his spectacles, and drawing his chair nearer to the frowning cripple, began to question her of her state; but Madame Dalibard abruptly and discourteously put a stop to all interrogatories—she had already exhausted all remedies art could suggest—she had become reconciled to her deplorable infirmity, and lost all faith in physicians;—some day or other she might try the baths at Egra, but, till then, she must be permitted to suffer undisturbed.

The doctor, by no means wishing to undertake a case of chronic paralysis, rose smilingly, and with a liberal confession that the German baths were sometimes extremely efficacious in such complaints, pressed Percival's outstretched hand, then slipped his own into his pocket, and bowed his way out of the room.

Relieved from all apprehension, Percival very good-humouredly received the hint of Madame Dalibard, that the excitement through which she had gone for the last twenty-four hours, rendered her unfit for his society; and went home to write to Laughton, and prepare all things for the reception of his guests. Varney accompanied him. Percival found Beck in the hall, already much altered, and embellished, by a new suit of livery. The ex-sweeper stared hard at Varney, who, without recognising, in so smart a shape, the squalid tatterdemalion who had lighted him up the stairs to Mr. Grabman's apartments, passed him by into Percival's little study, on the ground-floor.

"Well, Beck," said Percival, ever mindful of others, and attributing his groom's astonished gaze at Varney to his admiration of that gentleman's showy exterior—"I shall send you down to the country to-morrow with two of the horses—so you may have to-day to yourself, to take leave of your nurse. I flatter myself you will find her rooms a little more comfortable than they were yesterday."

Beck heard with a bursting heart; and his master, giving him a cheering tap on the shoulder, left him to find his way into the streets, and to Becky's abode.

He found, indeed, that the last had already undergone the magic transformation which is ever at the command of godlike wealth. Mrs. Mivers, who was naturally prompt and active, had had pleasure in executing Percival's commission. Early in the morning, floors had been scrubbed—the windows cleaned—the ventilator fixed;—then followed porters with chairs and tables, and a wonderful Dutch clock, and new bedding, and a bright piece of carpet; and then came two servants belonging to Mrs. Mivers to arrange the chattels; and

finally, when all was nearly completed, the Avatar of Mrs. Mivers herself, to give the last finish with her own mittened hands, and in her own housewifely apron.

The good lady was still employed in ranging a set of tea-cups on the shelves of the dresser, when Beck entered; and his old nurse, in the overflow of her gratitude, hobbled up to her foundling, and threw her arms round his neck.

"That's right!" said Mrs. Mivers, good-humouredly, turning round, and wiping the tear from her eye. "You ought to make much of him, poor lad; he has turned out a God-send, indeed; and, upon my word, he looks very respectable in his new clothes. But what is this—a child's coral?" as, opening a drawer in the dresser, she discovered Beck's treasure. "Dear me, it is a very handsome one—why, these bells look like gold!"—and, suspicion of her *protégé's* honesty, for a moment, contracted her thoughtful brow—"how ever on earth did you come by this, Mrs. Becky?"

"Sure and sartin," answered Becky, dropping her mutilated curtsy, "I be's glad it be found now, instead of sun days afore, or I might have been vicked enough to let it go vith the rest to the pop-shop; and I'm sure the time's out of mind, ven that 'ere boy was a h-urchin, that I've risted the timtashung, and said, 'No, Becky Carruthers, that maun't go to my h-uncle's!'"

"And why not, my good woman?"

"Lor' love you, marm, if that curril could speak, who knows vot it might say—eh, lad, who knows? You sees, marm, my good man had not a long been dead—I could not a get no vork, no vays—'Becky Carruthers,' says I, 'you must go out in the streets a begging!' I niver thought I should a come to that. But my poor husband, you sees, marm, fell from a scaffold,—as good a man as h-ever——"

"Yes, yes, you told me all that before," said Mrs. Mivers, growing impatient, and already diverted from her interest in the coral by a new cargo, all bright from the tinman, which, indeed, no less instantaneously, absorbed the admiration both of Beck and his nurse. And what with the inspection of these articles, and the comments each provoked, the coral rested in peace on the dresser, till Mrs. Mivers, when just about to renew her inquiries, was startled by the sound of the Dutch clock striking four, a voice which reminded her of the lapse of time, and her own dinner hour. So, with many promises to call again, and have a good chat with her humble friend, she took her departure, amidst the blessings of Becky, and the less noisy, but not less grateful salutations of Beck.

Very happy was the evening these poor creatures passed together over their first cup of tea from the new bright copper kettle, and the almost-forgotten luxury of crumpets, in which their altered circumstances permitted them, without extravagance, to indulge. In the course of conversation, Beck communicated how much he had been astonished by recognising the visitor of Grabman, the provoker of the irritable grave-stealer, in the familiar companion of his master; and when Becky told him how often in the domestic experience her avocation of charing had accumulated, she had heard of the ruin brought on rich

young men, by gamblers and sharpers, Beck promised to himself to keep a sharp eye on Grabman's showy acquaintance. "For master is but a babe like," said he, majestically; "and I'd be cut into mincemeat afore I'd let an 'air on his 'ead come to 'arm, if so be's h-as ow I could perwent it."

We need not say that his nurse confirmed him in these good resolutions.

"And now," said Beck, when the time came for parting, "you'll keep from the gin-shop, old 'oman, and not shame the young master?"

"Sartin sure," answered Becky; "it is only ven vun is down in the world that vun goes to the licker-shop. Now, h-indeed,"—and she looked round very proudly—"I 'as a 'spectable stashion, and I wouldn't go for to lower it, and let 'em say that Becky Carruthers does not know how to conduct herself. The curril will be safe enuff now—but praps you had best take it yourself, lad."

"Vot should I do vith it? I've had enuff of the 'sponsibility. Put it up in a 'ankerchiff, and praps ven master gets married, and 'as a babby vot's teethin', he vill say, 'Thank ye, Beck, for your curril.' Would not that make us proud, mammy?"

Chuckling heartily at that vision, Beck kissed his nurse, and trying hard to keep himself upright, and do credit to the dignity of his cloth, returned to his new room over the stables.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WAKING OF THE SERPENT.

AND how, O Poet of the sad belief, and eloquence, "like ebony at once dark and splendid,"* how couldst thou, august Lucretius, deem it but sweet to behold from the steep the strife of the great sea, or, safe from the peril, gaze on the wrath of the battle, or, serene in the temples of the wise, look afar on the wanderings of human error? Is it so sweet to survey the ills from which thou art delivered? Shall not the strong law of SYMPATHY find thee out, and thy heart rebuke thy philosophy? Not sweet, indeed, can be man's shelter in self, when he says to the storm, "I have no bark on the sea;" or to the gods of the battle, "I have no son in the slaughter;"—when he smiles unmoved upon Woe, and murmurs, "Weep on, for these eyes know no tears;"—when unappalled, he beholdeth the black deeds of crime, and cries to his conscience, "Thou art calm:"—Yet solemn is the sight to him, who lives in all life; seeks for Nature in the storm, and Providence in the battle; loses self in the woe; probes his heart in the crime; and owns no philosophy that sets him free from the fetters of man. Not in vain do we scan all the contrasts in the large frame-work of civilised earth, if we note, "when the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together." Range, O Art, through all space, clasp together all extremes, shake idle wealth from its lethargy, and bid States look in hovels, where

the teacher is dumb, and Reason unweeded runs to rot! Bid haughty Intellect pause in its triumph, and doubt if intellect alone can deliver the soul from its tempters!—Only *that* lives uncorrupt, which preserves in all seasons the human affections in which the breath of God breathes, and is! Go forth to the world, O Art!—go forth to the innocent, the guilty;—the wise, and the dull!—go forth as the still voice of Fate!—speak of the insecurity even of Goodness below!—carry on the rapt vision of suffering Virtue through "the doors of the shadows of death!"—show the dim revelation symbolled forth in the Tragedy of old!—how incomplete is man's destiny, how undeveloped is the justice divine, if Antigone sleep eternally in the ribs of the rock, and Œdipus vanish for ever in the Grove of the Furies! Here, below, "the waters are hid with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen!" But above liveth He "who can bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, and loose the bands of Orion." Go with Fate over the bridge, and she vanishes in the land beyond the gulf! Behold where the Eternal demands Eternity for the progress of His creatures, and the vindication of His justice!

It was past midnight, and Lucretia sat alone in her dreary room; her head buried on her bosom, her eyes fixed on the ground, her hands resting on her knees:—it was an image of inanimate prostration and decrepitude that might have moved compassion to its depth. The door opened, and Martha entered, to assist Madame

* It was said of Tertullian, that "his style was like ebony, dark and splendid."

Dalibard, as usual, to retire to rest. Her mistress slowly raised her eyes at the noise of the opening door, and those eyes took their searching, penetrating acuteness, as they fixed upon the florid, nor uncomely countenance of the waiting-woman.

In her starched cap, her sober-coloured stuff gown—in her prim, quiet manner, and a certain sanctified demureness of aspect, there was something in the first appearance of this woman, that impressed you with the notion of respectability, and inspired confidence in those steady, good qualities which we seek in a trusty servant. But, more closely examined, an habitual observer might have found much to qualify, perhaps to disturb, his first prepossessions. The exceeding lowness of the forehead, over which that stiff, harsh hair was so puritanically parted—the severe hardness of those thin, small lips, so pursed up and constrained—even a certain dull cruelty in those light, cold blue eyes, might have caused an uneasy sentiment, almost approaching to fear. The fat grocer's spoiled child instinctively recoiled from her, when she entered the shop to make her household purchases—the old, grey-whiskered terrier dog, at the public house, slunk into the tap when she crossed the threshold.

Madame Dalibard silently suffered herself to be wheeled into the adjoining bed-room, and the process of disrobing was nearly completed before she said, abruptly—

"So you attended Mr. Varney's uncle in his last illness. Did he suffer much?"

"He was a poor creature, at best," answered Martha; "but he gave me a deal of trouble afore he went. He was a scranny corpse when I strecked him out."

Madame Dalibard shrank from the hands at that moment employed upon herself, and said—

"It was not, then, the first corpse you have laid out for the grave?"

"Not by many."

"And did any of those you so prepared, die of the same complaint?"

"I can't say, I'm sure," returned Martha. "I never inquires how folks die; my bizness was to nurse 'em till all was over, and then to sit up. As they say in my country—'Riving Pike wears a hood, when the weather bodes ill.'"*

"And when you sat up with Mr. Varney's uncle, did you feel no fear in the dead of the night?—that corpse before you—no fear?"

"Young Mr. Varney said I should come to no harm. Oh, he's a clever man. What should I fear, ma'am?" answered Martha, with a horrid simplicity.

"You have belonged to a very religious sect, I think I have heard you say—a sect not unfamiliar to me—a sect to which great crime is very rarely known?"

"Yes, ma'am, some of 'em be tame enough, but others be weel† deep!"

"You do not believe what they taught you?"

"I did, when I was young and silly."

"And what disturbed your belief?"

"Ma'am, the man what taught me, and my mother afore me, was the first I ever kep company w'ith," answered Martha, without a change in her florid hue, which seemed fixed in her cheek, as the red in an autumn leaf. "After he had ruined me, as the girls say, he told me as how it was all sham!"

"You loved him, then?"

"The man was well enough, ma'am, and he behaved handsome, and got me a husband. I've known better days."

* "If Riving Pike do wear a hood,
The day, be sure, will ne'er be good."
A LANCASHIRE DISTICH.

† Weel,—whirlpool.

"You sleep well at night?"

"Yes, ma'am, thank you, I loves my bed."

"I have done with you," said Madame Dalibard, stifling a groan, as now, placed in her bed, she turned to the wall. Martha extinguished the candle, leaving it on the table by the bed, with a book and a box of matches, for Madame Dalibard was a bad sleeper, and often read in the night. She then drew the curtains, and went her way.

It might be an hour after Martha had retired to rest, that a hand was stretched from the bed, that the candle was lighted, and Lucretia Dalibard rose; with a sudden movement she threw aside the coverings, and stood in her long night-gear on the floor. Yes, the helpless, paralysed cripple rose—was on her feet—tall, elastic, erect! It was as a resuscitation from the grave. Never was change more startling than that simple action effected—not in the form alone, but the whole character of the face. The solitary light streamed upward on a countenance, on every line of which spoke sinister power and strong resolve. If you had ever seen her before, in her false, crippled state, prostrate and helpless, and could have seen her then—those eyes, if haggard still, now full of life and vigour—that frame, if spare, towering aloft in commanding stature, perfect in its proportions as a Grecian image of Nemesis—your amaze would have merged into terror, so preternatural did the transformation appear!—so did aspect and bearing contradict the very character of her sex; uniting the two elements, most formidable in man or in fiend—wickedness and power!

She stood a moment motionless, breathing loud, as if it were a joy to breathe free from restraint, and then, lifting the light, and gliding to the adjoining room, she unlocked a

bureau in the corner, and bent over a small casket, which she opened with a secret spring.

Reader, cast back your eye to that passage in this history, when Lucretia Clavering took down the volume from the niche in the tapestried chamber at Laughton, and numbered, in thought, the hours left to her uncle's life. Look back on the ungrateful thought—behold, how it has swelled and ripened into the guilty deed! There, in that box, Death guards his treasure-crypt. There, all the science of Hades numbers its murderous inventions. As she searched for the ingredients her design had pre-selected, something heavier than those small packets she deranged, fell to the bottom of the box with a low and hollow sound. She started at the noise, and then smiled, in scorn of her momentary fear, as she took up the ring that had occasioned the sound—a ring plain and solid, like those used as signets in the Middle Ages, with a large dull opal in the centre. What secret could that bauble have in common with its ghastly companions in Death's crypt? This had been found amongst Olivier's papers; a note in that precious manuscript, which had given to the hands of his successors the keys of the grave, had discovered the mystery of its uses. By the pressure of the hand, at the touch of a concealed spring, a barbed point flew forth, steeped in venom, more deadly than the Indian extracts from the bag of the cobra-capella,—a venom to which no antidote is known, which no test can detect. It corrupts the whole mass of the blood—it mounts in frenzy and fire to the brain—it rends the soul from the body in spasm and convulsion. But examine the dead, and how divine the effect of the cause?—how go back to the records of the Borgias, and amidst all the scepticism of times in which, happily, such arts are unknown, unsuspected, learn from

the hero of Machiavel how a clasp of the hand can get rid of a foe! Easier and more natural to point to the living puncture in the skin, and the swollen flesh round it, and dilate on the danger a rusty nail—nay, a pin, can engender—when the humours are peccant, and the blood is impure! The fabrication of that bauble, the discovery of Borgnia's device, was the masterpiece in the science of Dalibard; a curious and philosophical triumph of research, hitherto unused by its inventor and his heirs; for that casket is rich in the choice of more gentle materials: but the use yet may come. As she gazed on the ring, there was a complacent and proud expression on Lucretia's face.

"Dumb token of Cesar Borgnia!" she murmured—"him of the wisest head and the boldest hand that ever grasped at empire;—whom Machiavel the virtuous, rightly praised as the model of accomplished ambition! Why should I falter in the paths which he trod with his royal step, only because my goal is not a throne? Every circle is as complete in itself, whether rounding a globule or a star. Why groan in the belief that the mind defiles itself by the darkness through which it glides on its object, or the mire through which it ascends to the hill? Murderer as he was, poisoner, and fraticide—did blood clog his intellect? or crime impoverish the luxury of his genius? Was his verse less melodious,* or his love of art less

* It is well known that Cæsar Borgnia was both a munificent patron and an exquisite appreciator of art—well known also are his powers of persuasion; but the general reader may not perhaps be acquainted with the

intense, or his eloquence less persuasive, because he sought to remove every barrier, revenge every wrong, crush every foe!"

In the wondrous corruption to which her mind had descended, thus murmured Lucretia. Intellect had been so long made her sole god, that the very monster of history was lifted to her reverence by his ruthless intellect alone; lifted, in that mood of feverish excitement, when conscience, often less silenced, lay crushed under the load of the deed to come, into an example and a guide.

Though, at times, when looking back, oppressed by the blackest despair, no remorse of the past ever weakened those nerves, when the Hour called up its demon, and the Will ruled the rest of the human being as a machine.

She replaced the ring—she reclosed the casket, and relocked its depositary; then passed again into the adjoining chamber.

A few minutes afterwards, and the dim light that stole from the heavens (in which the moon was partially overcast), through the casement on the staircase, rested on a shapeless figure, robed in black from head to foot—a figure so obscure and indefinable in outline, so suited to the gloom in its hue, so stealthy and rapid in its movements, that, had you started from sleep, and seen it on your floor, you would, perforce, have deemed that your fancy had befooled you!

Thus darkly, through the darkness, went the Poisoner to her prey.

fact, that this terrible criminal was also a poet.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RETROSPECT.

WE have now arrived at that stage in this history when it is necessary to look back on the interval in Lucretia's life—between the death of Dalibard, and her re-introduction, in the second portion of our tale.

One day, without previous notice or warning, Lucretia arrived at William Mainwaring's house; she was in the deep weeds of widowhood, and that garb of mourning sufficed to add Susan's tenderest commiseration to the warmth of her affectionate welcome. Lucretia appeared to have forgiven the past, and to have conquered its more painful recollections; she was gentle to Susan, though she rather suffered than returned her caresses; she was open and frank to William. Both felt inexpressibly grateful for her visit—the forgiveness it betokened, and the confidence it implied. At this time, no condition could be more promising and prosperous than that of the young banker. From the first, the most active partner in the bank, he had now virtually almost monopolised the business. The senior partner was old and infirm; the second had a bucolic turn, and was much taken up by the care of a large farm he had recently purchased, so that Mainwaring, more and more trusted and honoured, became the sole managing administrator of the firm. Business thrived in his able hands; and with patient and steady perseverance there was little doubt but what, before middle age was attained, his competence would have swelled into a fortune sufficient to justify him in realising

the secret dream of his heart—the parliamentary representation of the town in which he had already secured the affection and esteem of the inhabitants.

It was not long before Lucretia detected the ambition William's industry but partially concealed; it was not long before, with the ascendancy natural to her will and her talents, she began to exercise considerable, though unconscious, influence over a man in whom a thousand good qualities, and some great talents were unhappily accompanied by infirm purpose and weak resolutions. The ordinary conversation of Lucretia, unsettled his mind and inflamed his vanity—a conversation able, aspiring, full both of knowledge drawn from books, and of that experience of public men, which her residence in Paris—(whereon, with its new and greater Charlemagne, the eyes of the world were turned) had added to her acquisitions in the lore of human life. Nothing more disturbs a mind like William Mainwaring's than that species of eloquence which rebukes its patience in the present, by inflaming all its hopes in the future. Lucretia had none of the charming babble of women—none of that tender interest in household details, in the minutiae of domestic life, which relaxes the intellect while softening the heart. Hard and vigorous, her sentences came forth in eternal appeal to the reason, or address to the sterner passions in which love has no share. Beside this strong thinker, poor Susan's

sweet talk seemed frivolous and insane. Her soft hold upon Mainwaring loosened: He ceased to consult her upon business—he began to repine that the partner of his lot could have little sympathy with his dreams—more often and more bitterly now did his discontented glance, in his way homeward, rove to the roof-tops of the rural member for the town; more eagerly did he read the parliamentary debates—more heavily did he sigh at the thought of eloquence denied a vent, and ambition delayed in its career.

When arrived at this state of mind, Lucretia's conversation took a more worldly, a more practical turn. Her knowledge of the speculators of Paris instructed her pictures of bold ingenuity creating sudden wealth; she spoke of fortunes made in a day—of *parvenus* bursting into *millionaires*—of wealth as the necessary instrument of ambition, as the arch ruler of the civilised world. Never once, be it observed, in these temptations, did Lucretia address herself to the heart—the ordinary channels of vulgar seduction were disdained by her; she would not have stooped so low as Mainwaring's love, could she have commanded or allured it; she was willing to leave to Susan the husband reft from her own passionate youth, but leave him with the brand on his brow and the worm at his heart—a scoff and a wreck.

At this time, there was in that market town, one of those adventurous speculative men, who are the more dangerous impostors, because imposed upon by their own sanguine chimeras, who have a plausibility in their calculations, an earnestness in their arguments, which account for the dupes they daily make in our most sober and wary of civilised communities. Unscrupulous in their means, yet really honest in the belief that their objects can be attained, they

are at once the rogues and fanatics of Mammon! This person was held to have been fortunate in some adroit speculations in the corn trade, and he was brought too frequently into business with Mainwaring not to be a frequent visitor at the house. In him, Lucretia saw the very instrument of her design, she led him on to talk of business as a game—of money as a realiser of cent. per cent.—she drew him into details—she praised him, she admired. In his presence she seemed only to hear him—in his absence, musingly, she started from silence to exclaim on the acuteness of his genius and the accuracy of his figures. Soon the tempter at Mainwaring's heart gave signification to these praises—soon this adventurer became his most intimate friend. Scarcely knowing why, never ascribing the change to her sister, poor Susan wept, amazed at Mainwaring's transformation—no care now for the new books from London, or the roses in the garden!—the music on the instrument was unheeded! Books, roses, music!—what are those trifles to a man thinking upon cent. per cent.? Mainwaring's very countenance altered—it lost its frank, affectionate beauty;—sullen, abstracted, morose—it showed that some great care was at the core. Then Lucretia herself began grievously to notice the change to Susan—gradually she altered her tone with regard to the speculator, and hinted vague fears, and urged Susan to remonstrance and warning. As she anticipated, warning and remonstrance came in vain to the man, who comparing Lucretia's mental power to Susan's, had learned to despise the unlearned timid sense of the last.

It is unnecessary to trace this change in Mainwaring, step by step, or to measure the time which sufficed to dazzle his reason and blind his

honour. In the midst of schemes and hopes, which the lust of gold now pervaded, came a thunderbolt. An anonymous letter to the head partner of the bank, provoked suspicions that led to minute examination of the accounts. It seemed that sums had been irregularly advanced (upon bills drawn upon men of straw) to the speculator by Mainwaring; and the destination of these sums could be traced to gambling operations in trade, in which Mainwaring had a private interest and partnership. So great, as we have said, had been the confidence placed in William's abilities and honour, that the facilities afforded him, in the disposal of the joint stock, far exceeded those usually granted to the partner of a firm, and the breach of trust appeared the more flagrant from the extent of the confidence misplaced. Meanwhile, William Mainwaring, though as yet unconscious of the proceedings of his partners, was gnawed by anxiety and remorse, not unminged with hope. He depended upon the result of a bold speculation in the purchase of shares in a Canal Company, a bill for which was then before Parliament, with (as he was led to believe) a certainty of success. The sums he had, on his own responsibility, abstracted from the joint account were devoted to this adventure. But to do him justice, he never dreamed of appropriating the profits anticipated, to himself. Though knowing that the bills, on which the monies had been advanced, were merely nominal deposits, he had confidently calculated on the certainty of success for the speculations, to which the proceeds so obtained were devoted, and he looked forward to the moment when he might avow what he had done, and justify it by doubling the capital withdrawn. But to his inconceivable horror, the bill of the Canal Company was rejected

in the Lords—the shares bought at a premium went down to zero; and, to add to his perplexity, the speculator abruptly disappeared from the town. In this crisis, he was summoned to meet his indignant associates.

The evidence against him was morally damning, if not legally conclusive. The unhappy man heard all in the silence of despair. Crushed and bewildered, he attempted no defence. He asked but an hour to sum up the losses of the bank, and his own; they amounted within a few hundreds to the ten thousand pounds he had brought to the firm, and which, in the absence of marriage-settlements, was entirely at his own disposal. This sum he at once resigned to his associates, on condition that they should defray from it his personal liabilities. The money thus repaid, his partners naturally relinquished all further inquiry. They were moved by pity for one so gifted and so fallen—they even offered him a subordinate, but lucrative situation, in the firm in which he had been partner: but Mainwaring wanted the patience and resolution to work back the redemption of his name—perhaps, ultimately, of his fortunes. In the fatal anguish of his shame and despair, he fled from the town, his flight confirmed for ever the rumours against him—rumours worse than the reality. It was long before he even admitted Susan to the knowledge of the obscure refuge he had sought; there, at length, she joined him. Meanwhile, what did Lucretia?—she sold nearly half of her own fortune, constituted principally of the moiety of her portion, which, at Dalibard's death, had passed to herself as survivor, and partly of the share in her deceased husband's effects, which the French law awarded to her; and with the proceeds of this sum she purchased an annuity for her victims! Was this strange generosity

the act of mercy—the result of repentance? No; it was one of the not least subtle and delicious refinements of her revenge. To know him who had rejected her—the rival who had supplanted—the miserable pensioners of her bounty, was dear to her haughty and disdainful hate. The lust of power, ever stronger in her than avarice, more than reconciled her to the sacrifice of gold;—yes, here, she, the despised, the degraded—had power still;—her wrath had ruined the fortunes of her victims, blasted the repute, embittered and desolated evermore the future,—now her contemptuous charity fed the wretched lives that she spared in scorn. She had no small difficulty, it is true, in persuading Susan to accept this sacrifice, and she did so only by sustaining her sister's belief, that the past yet could be retrieved—that Mainwaring's energies could yet rebuild their fortunes,—and that as the annuity was at any time redeemable, the aid therefore was only temporary. With this understanding, Susan, overwhelmed with gratitude, weeping, and broken-hearted, departed to join the choice of her youth. As the men, deputed by the auctioneer to arrange and ticket the furniture for sale, entered the desolate house, Lucretia then, with the step of a conqueror, passed from the threshold.

"Ah!" she murmured as she paused, and gazed on the walls—"ah, they were happy when I first entered those doors!—happy in each other's tranquil love—happier still, when they deemed I had forgiven the wrong, and adjured the past! How honoured was then their home! How knew I then, for the first time, what the home of love can be? And who had destroyed for me, upon all the earth, a home like theirs?—they on whom that home smiled with its serene and taunting peace!—I—I, the guest!—I—I, the abandoned!—

the betrayed—what dark memories were on my soul!—what a hell boiled within my bosom!—Well might those memories take each a voice to accuse them!—well, from that hell, might rise the Alecto! Their lives were in my power!—my fatal dowry at my command—rapid death, or slow consuming torture;—but to have seen each cheer the other to the grave, lighting every downward step with the eyes of love—vengeance, so urged, would have fallen only on myself! Ha! deceiver, didst thou plume thyself, forsooth, on spotless reputation!—didst thou stand, *me* by thy side, amongst thy perjured household gods, and talk of honour? Thy home—it is reft from thee!—thy reputation, it is a scoff—thine honour, it is a ghost that shall haunt thee! Thy love, can it linger yet!—Shall the soft eyes of thy wife not burn into thy heart, and shame turn love into loathing? Wrecks of my vengeance—minions of my bounty—I did well to let ye live! I shake the dust from my feet on your threshold;—live on—homeless, hopeless, and childless! The curse is fulfilled!"

From that hour, Lucretia never paused from her career to inquire further of her victims;—she never entered into communication with either. They knew not her address, nor her fate, nor she theirs. As she had reckoned, Mainwaring made no effort to recover himself from his fall. All the high objects that had lured his ambition, were gone from him evermore. No place in the state, no authority in the senate, awaits in England the man with a blighted name. For the lesser objects of life, he had no heart, and no care. They lived in obscurity in a small village in Cornwall, till the Peace allowed them to remove to France. The rest of their fate is known.

Meanwhile, Lucretia removed to one of those smaller London—re-

sorts of pleasure and idleness, with which rich England abounds, and in which widows of limited income can make poverty seem less plebeian. And now, to all those passions that had hitherto raged within her, a dismal apathy succeeded. It was the great calm in her sea of life. The winds fell, and the sails drooped. Her vengeance satisfied, that, which she had made so preternaturally the main object of existence, once fulfilled, left her in youth objectless.

She strove at first to take pleasure in the society of the place, but its frivolities and pettiness of purpose soon wearied that masculine and grasping mind, already made insensible to the often healthful, often innocent, excitement of trifles, by the terrible ordeal it had passed. Can the touch of the hand, scorched by the burning iron, feel pleasure in the softness of silk, or the light down of the cygnet's plume? She next sought such relief as study could afford; and her natural bent of thought, and her desire to vindicate her deeds to herself, plunged her into the fathomless abyss of metaphysical inquiry, with the hope to confirm into positive assurance her earlier scepticism—with the atheist's hope to annihilate the soul, and banish the presiding God. But no voice that could satisfy her reason came from those dreary deeps: contradiction on contradiction met her in the maze. Only when, wearied with book-lore, she turned her eyes to the visible nature, and beheld everywhere harmony, order, system, contrivance, art, did she start with the amazement and awe of instinctive conviction; and the natural religion revolted from her cheerless ethics! Then, came one of those sudden reactions common with strong passions and exploring minds—but more common with women, however manlike, than with men. Had she lived in Italy then, she had

become a nun! For in this woman, unlike Varney and Dalibard, the conscience could never be utterly silenced. In her choice of evil, she found only torture to her spirit in all the respites afforded to the occupations it indulged. When employed upon ill, remorse gave way to the zest of scheming; when the ill was done, remorse came with the repose.

It was in this peculiar period of her life that Lucretia, turning everywhere, and desperately, for escape from the past, became acquainted with some members of one of the most rigid of the sects of dissent. At first, she permitted herself to know and commune with these persons from a kind of contemptuous curiosity; she desired to encourage, in contemplating them, her experience of the follies of human nature; but in that crisis of her mind, in those struggles of her reason, whatever showed that which she yearned most to discover—viz., earnest faith, rooted and genuine conviction, whether of annihilation or of immortality—a philosophy that might reconcile her to crime by destroying the providence of good, or a creed that could hold out the hope of redeeming the past, and exorcising sin by the mystery of a Divine sacrifice,—had over her a power which she had not imagined or divined. Gradually the intense convictions of her new associates disturbed and infected her. Their affirmations, that as we are born in wrath, so sin is our second nature, our mysterious heritage, seemed, to her understanding, willing to be blinded, to imply excuses for her past misdeeds. Their assurances that the worst sinner may become the most earnest saint—that through but one act of the will, resolute faith, all redemption is to be found,—these affirmations and these assurances, which have so often restored the guilty, and remodelled the human

heart, made a salutary, if brief, impression upon her. Nor were the lives of these dissenters, (for the most part, austere moral,) nor the peace and self-complacency which they evidently found in the satisfaction of conscience and fulfilment of duty, without an influence over her, that, for awhile, both chastened and soothed.

Hopeful of such a convert, the good teachers strove hard to confirm the seeds, springing up from the granite and amidst the weeds; and amongst them came one man more eloquent, more seductive than the rest, Alfred Braddell. This person, a trader at Liverpool, was one of those strange living paradoxes that can rarely be found out of a commercial community. He himself had been a convert to the sect, and like most converts, he pushed his enthusiasm into the bigotry of the zealot. He saw no salvation out of the pale into which he had entered; but though his belief was sincere, it did not genially operate on his practical life; with the most scrupulous attention to forms, he had the worldliness and cunning of the carnal. He had aljured the vices of the softer senses, but not that which so seldom wars on the decorums of outer life. He was essentially a money-maker—close, acute, keen, over-reaching. Good works with him were indeed as nothing—faith, the all in all: He was one of the elect, and could not fall. Still in this man there was all the intensity which often characterises a mind in proportion to the narrowness of its compass; that intensity gave fire to his gloomy eloquence, and strength to his obstinate will. He saw Lucretia, and his zeal for her conversion soon expanded into love for her person, yet that love was secondary to his covetousness. Though ostensibly in a flourishing business, he was greatly distressed

for money to carry on operations which swelled beyond the reach of his capital; his fingers itched for the sum which Lucretia had still at her disposal: But the seeming sincerity of the man, the persuasion of his goodness, his reputation for sanctity, deceived her; she believed herself honestly and ardently beloved, and by one who could guide her back, if not to happiness, at least to repose. She herself loved him not, she could love no more. But it seemed to her a luxury to find some one she could trust, she could honour. If you had probed into the recesses of her mind at that time, you would have found that no religious belief was there settled—only the desperate *wish* to believe—only the disturbance of all previous infidelity—only a restless gnawing desire to escape from memory, to emerge from the gulf. In this troubled, impatient, disorder of mind and feeling, she hurried into a second marriage as fatal as the first.

For awhile she bore patiently all the privations of that ascetic household; assisted in all those external formalities, centered all her intellect within that iron range of existence. But no grace descended on her soul—no warm ray unlocked the ice of the well. Then, gradually becoming aware of the niggardly meannesses, of the harsh, uncharitable judgments, of the decorous frauds, that, with unconscious hypocrisy, her husband concealed beneath the robes of sanctity, a weary disgust stole over her; it stole, it deepened, it increased: it became intolerable, when she discovered that Braddell had knowingly deceived her as to his worldly substance. In that mood into which she had rushed into these ominous nuptials, she had had no thought for vulgar advantages; had Braddell been a beggar, she had married him as rashly. But he, with the inability to comprehend a nature like hers—

dim not more to her terrible vices than to the sinister grandeur which made their ordinary atmosphere—had descended cunningly to address the avarice he thought as potent in others as himself, to enlarge on the worldly prosperity with which Providence had blessed him; and now she saw that her dowry alone had saved the crippled trader from the bankrupt list. With this revolting discovery, with the scorn it produced, vanished all Lucretia's unstable visions of reform. She saw this man a saint amongst his tribe, and would not believe in the virtues of his brethren, great and unquestionable as they might have been proved to a more dispassionate and humble inquirer. The imposture she detected, she deemed universal in the circle in which she dwelt; and Satan once more smiled upon the subject he regained. Lucretia became a mother—but their child formed no endearing tie between the ill-assorted pair; it rather embittered their discord. Dimly, even then, as she bent over the cradle, that vision which now, in the old house at Brompton, haunted her dreams, and beckoned her over seas of blood into the fancied future—was foreshadowed in the face of her infant son. To be born again in that birth—to live only in that life—to aspire as man may aspire, in that future man whom she would train to knowledge and lead to power,—these were the feelings with which that sombre mother gazed upon her babe. The idea that the low-born, grovelling father had the sole right over that son's destiny, had the authority to cabin his mind in the walls of form, bind him down to the sordid apprenticeship, debased, not dignified, by the solemn mien, roused her indignant wrath,—she sickened when Braddell touched her child. All her pride of intellect, that had never slept—all her pride of birth, long dormant, woke up to protect the heir of her ambition, the descendant of her race, from the defilement of the father's nurture. Not long after her confinement, she formed a plan for escape—she disappeared from the house with her child. Taking refuge in a cottage, living on the sale of the few jewels she possessed, she was for some weeks almost happy. But Braddell, less grieved by the loss than shocked by the scandal, was indefatigable in his researches—he discovered her retreat. The scene between them was terrible. There was no resisting the power which all civilised laws give to the rights of husband and father. Before this man, whom she scorned so unutterably, Lucretia was impotent. Then, all the boiling passions long suppressed beneath that command of temper, which she owed both to habitual simulation and intense disdain, rushed forth. Then, she appalled the impostor with her indignant denunciations of his hypocrisy, his meanness, and his guile. Then, throwing off the mask she had worn, she hurled her anathema on his sect, on his faith, with the same breath that smote his conscience and left it wordless. She shocked all the notions he sincerely entertained, and he stood awed by accusations from a blasphemer whom he dared not rebuke. His rage broke at length from his awe. Stung, maddened by the scorn of himself, his blood fired into juster indignation by her scoff at his creed, he lost all self-possession, and struck her to the ground. In the midst of shame and dread at disclosure of his violence, which succeeded the act so provoked, he was not less relieved than amazed when Lucretia, rising slowly, laid her hand gently on his arm, and said, "Repent not, it is past; fear not, I will be silent! Come, you are the stronger—you prevail. I will follow my child to your home."

In this unexpected submission in one so imperious, Braddell's imperfect comprehension of character saw but fear, and his stupidity exulted in his triumph. Lucretia returned with him. A few days afterwards, Braddell became ill; the illness increased,—slow, gradual, wearing. It broke his spirit with his health; and then the steadfast imperiousness of Lucretia's stern will ruled and subjugated him. He cowered beneath her haughty, searching gaze, he shivered at her sidelong, malignant glance; but with this fear came necessarily hate; and this hate, sometimes sufficing to vanquish the fear, spitefully evinced itself in thwarting her legitimate control over her infant. He would have it (though he had little real love for children) constantly with him, and affected to contradict all her own orders to the servants, in the sphere in which mothers arrogate most the right. Only on these occasions sometimes would Lucretia lose her grim self-control, and threaten that her child yet should be emancipated from his hands,—should yet be taught the scorn for hypocrites, which he had taught herself. These words sank deep not only in the resentment, but in the conscience of the husband. Meanwhile, Lucretia scrupled not to evince her disdain of Braddell, by markedly abstaining from all the ceremonies she had before so rigidly observed. The sect grew scandalised. Braddell did not abstain from making known his causes of complaint. The haughty, imperious woman was condemned in the community, and hated in the household.

It was at this time that Walter Ardworth, who was then striving to eke out his means by political lectures (which at the earlier part of the century found ready audience) in our great towns, came to Liverpool. Braddell and Ardworth had been schoolfellows, and even at school,

embryo politicians of congenial notions; and the conversion of the former to one of the sects which had grown out of the old creeds, that, under Cromwell, had broken the sceptre of the son of Belial, and established the Commonwealth of Saints, had only strengthened the republican tenets of the sour fanatic. Ardworth called on Braddell, and was startled to find in his schoolfellow's wife, the niece of his benefactor, Sir Miles St. John. Now, Lucretia had never divulged her true parentage to her husband. In an union so much beneath her birth, she had desired to conceal from all her connexions—the fall of the once-honoured heiress. She had descended, in search of peace, to obscurity; but her pride revolted from the thought, that her low-born husband might boast of her connexions, and parade her descent to his level. Fortunately, as she thought, she received Ardworth before he was admitted to her husband, who now, growing feebler and feebler, usually kept his room. She stooped to beseech Ardworth not to reveal her secret, and he, comprehending her pride, as a man well-born himself, and pitying her pain, readily gave his promise. At the first interview, Braddell evinced no pleasure in the sight of his old schoolfellow. It was natural enough that one so precise should be somewhat revolted by one so careless of all form. But when Lucretia imprudently evinced satisfaction at his surly remarks on his visitor—when he perceived that it would please her that he should not cultivate the acquaintance offered him, he was moved by the spirit of contradiction, and the spiteful delight even in frivolous annoyance to conciliate and court the intimacy he had at first disdained; and then, by degrees, sympathy in political matters and old recollections of sportive, careless boyhood, cemented the intimacy

into a more familiar bond than the sectarian had contracted really with any of his late associates.

Lucretia regarded this growing friendship with great uneasiness—the uneasiness increased to alarm, when one day, in the presence of Ardworth, Braddell, writhing with a sudden spasm, said—"I cannot account for these strange seizures—I think verily I am poisoned!"—and his dull eye rested on Lucretia's pallid brow. She was unusually thoughtful for some days after this remark, and one morning she informed her husband that she had received the intelligence that a relation, from whom she had pecuniary expectations, was dangerously ill, and requested his permission to visit this sick kinsman, who dwelt in a distant county. Braddell's eyes brightened at the thought of her absence; with little further questioning he consented; and Lucretia, sure perhaps that the barb was in the side of her victim, and reckoning, it may be, on greater freedom from suspicion if her husband died in her absence, left the house. It was, indeed, to the neighbourhood of her kindred that she went. In a private conversation with Ardworth, when questioning him of his news of the present possessor of Laughton, he had informed her, that he had heard accidentally that Vernon's two sons (Percival was not then born) were sickly; and she went into Hampshire, secretly and unknown, to see what were really the chances that her son might yet become the lord of her lost inheritance.

During this absence, Braddell, now gloomily aware that his days were numbered, resolved to put into practice the idea long contemplated, and even less favoured by his spite than justified by the genuine convictions of his conscience. Whatever his faults, sincere at least in his religious belief, he

might well look with dread to the prospect of the training and education his son would receive from the hands of a mother who had blasphemed his sect, and openly proclaimed her infidelity. By will, it is true, he might create a trust, and appoint guardians to his child. But to have lived under the same roof with his wife—nay, to have carried her back to that roof when she had left it, afforded tacit evidence that whatever the disagreement between them, her conduct could hardly have merited her exclusion from the privileges of a mother. The guardianship might therefore avail little to frustrate Lucretia's indirect contamination, if not her positive control. Beside, where guardians are appointed money must be left; and Braddell knew that at his death his assets would be found insufficient for his debts. Who would be guardian to a penniless infant? He resolved, therefore, to send his child from his roof, to some place where, if reared humbly, it might at least be brought up in the right faith—some place which might defy the search and be beyond the perversion of the unbelieving mother. He looked round, and discovered no instrument for his purpose that seemed so ready as Walter Ardworth. For by this time he had thoroughly excited the pity and touched the heart of that good-natured, easy man. His representations of the misconduct of Lucretia were the more implicitly believed by one who had always been secretly prepossessed against her—who, admitted to household intimacy, was an eye-witness to her hard indifference to her husband's sufferings—who saw in her very request not to betray her gentle birth, the shame she felt in her election—who regarded with indignation her unfeeling desertion of Braddell in his last moments, and who, besides all this, had some private misfortunes of his own, which made

him the more ready listener to themes on the faults of women, and had already, by mutual confidences, opened the hearts of the two ancient school-fellows to each other's complaints and wrongs. The only other confidante in the refuge selected for the child, was a member of the same community as Braddell, who kindly undertook to search for a pious, godly woman, who, upon such pecuniary considerations as Braddell, by robbing his creditors, could afford to bestow, would permanently offer to the poor infant a mother's home and a mother's care. When this woman was found, Braddell confided his child to Ardworth, with such a sum as he could scrape together for its future maintenance. And to Ardworth, rather than to his fellow-sectarian, this double trust was given, because the latter feared scandal and misrepresentation, if he should be ostensibly mixed up in so equivocal a charge. Poor and embarrassed as Walter Ardworth was, Braddell did not for once misinterpret character when he placed the money in his hands, and this because the characters we have known in transparent boyhood we have known for ever. Ardworth was reckless, and his whole life had been wrecked—his whole nature materially degraded—by the want of common thrift and prudence. His own money slipped through his fingers, and left him surrounded by creditors, whom, rigidly speaking, he thus defrauded; but direct dishonesty was as wholly out of the chapter of his vices, as if he had been a man of the strictest principles and the steadiest honour.

The child was gone—the father died—Lucretia returned, as we have seen in Grabman's letter, to the house of death, to meet suspicion and cold looks, and menial accusations, and an inquest on the dead: but through all this the reft tigress mourned her stolen whelp. As soon as all evidence

against her was proved legally groundless, and she had leave to depart, she searched blindly and frantically for her lost child; but in vain. The utter and penniless destitution in which she was left by her husband's decease, did not suffice to terminate her maddening chase. On foot she wandered from village to village, and begged her way, wherever a false clue misled her steps.

At last, in reluctant despair, she resigned the pursuit, and found herself one day in the midst of the streets of London, half-famished and in rags; and before her suddenly, now grown into vigorous youth—blooming, sleek, and seemingly prosperous—stood Gabriel Varney. By her voice, as she approached and spoke, he recognised his step-mother; and, after a short pause of hesitation, he led her to his home. It is not our purpose (for it is not necessary to those passages of their lives from which we have selected the thread of our tale) to follow these two, thus united, through their general career of spoliation and crime. Birds of prey, they searched in human follies and human errors for their food: sometimes severed, sometimes together, their interests remained one. Varney profited by the mightier and subtler genius of evil to which he had leashed himself: for, caring little for luxuries, and dead to the softer senses, she abandoned to him readily the larger share of their plunder. Under a variety of names and disguises, through a succession of frauds, some vast and some mean, but chiefly on the Continent, they had pursued their course, eluding all danger, and baffling all law.

Between three and four years before this period, Varney's uncle the painter, by one of those unexpected caprices of fortune which sometimes find heirs to a *millionaire* at the weaver's loom or the labourers

plough, had suddenly, by the death of a very distant kinsman, whom he had never seen, come into possession of a small estate, which he sold for 6000*l*. Retiring from his profession, he lived, as comfortably as his shattered constitution permitted, upon the interest of this sum; and he wrote to his nephew, then at Paris, to communicate the good news, and offer the hospitality of his hearth. Varney hastened to London. Shortly afterwards a nurse, recommended as an experienced, useful person in her profession, by Nicholas Grabman, who, in many a tortuous scheme, had been Gabriel's confederate, was installed in the poor painter's house. From that time his infirmities increased. He died, as his doctor said, "by abstaining from the stimulants to which his constitution had been so long accustomed;" and Gabriel Varney was summoned to the reading of the will. To his inconceivable disappointment, instead of bequeathing to his nephew the free disposal of his 6000*l*., that sum was assigned to trustees for the benefit of Gabriel and his children yet unborn: "An inducement," said the poor testator, tenderly, "for the boy to marry and reform!" So that the nephew could only enjoy the interest, and had no control over the capital. The interest of 6000*l*. invested in the Bank of England, was *flocci, nauci* to the voluptuous spendthrift, Gabriel Varney!

Now, these trustees were selected from the painter's earlier and more respectable associates, who had dropped him, it is true, in his days of beggary and disrepute, but whom the fortune that made him respectable had again conciliated. One of these trustees had lately retired to pass the remainder of his days at Boulogne;—the other was a hypocondriacal valetudinarian. Neither of them, in short, a man of business. Gabriel

was left to draw out the interest of the money, as it became periodically due, at the Bank of England. In a few months, the trustee settled at Boulogne died—the trust, of course lapsed to Mr. Stubmore, the valetudinarian survivor. Soon pinched by extravagances, and emboldened by the character and helpless state of the surviving trustee, Varney forged Mr. Stubmore's signature to an order on the Bank, to sell out such portion of the capital as his wants required. The impunity of one offence, begot courage for others, till the whole was well nigh expended. Upon these sums, Varney had lived very pleasantly, and he saw with a deep sigh the approaching failure of so facile a resource.

In one of the melancholy moods engendered by this reflection, Varney happened to be in the very town in France in which the Mainwarings, in their later years, had taken refuge, and from which Helen had been removed to the roof of Mr. Fielden. By accident he heard the name, and, his curiosity leading to further inquiries, learned that Helen was made an heiress by the will of her grandfather. With this knowledge came a thought of the most treacherous, the most miscreant and the vilest crime, that even *he* yet had perpetrated; so black was it, that for awhile, he absolutely struggled against it. But in guilt there seems ever a Necessity, that urges on step after step—to the last consummation. Varney received a letter to inform him that the last surviving trustee was no more, that the trust was, therefore, now centered in his son and heir, that that gentleman was at present very busy in settling his own affairs, and examining into a very mismanaged property in Devonshire, which had devolved upon him; but that he hoped in a few months to discharge more efficiently, than

his father had done, the duties of trustee, and that some more profitable investment than the Bank of England would probably occur.

This new trustee was known personally to Varney—a contemporary of his own, and, in earlier youth, a pupil to his uncle. But, since then, he had made way in life, and retired from the Profession of Art. This younger Stubmore, he knew to be a bustling, officious, man of business—somewhat greedy and covetous, but withal somewhat weak of purpose, good-natured in the main, and with a little lukewarm kindness for Gabriel, as a quondam fellow-pupil. That Stubmore would discover the fraud was evident—that he would declare it, for his own sake, was evident also—that the Bank would prosecute—that Varney would be convicted, was no less surely to be apprehended. There was only one chance left to the forger—if he could get into his hands, and in time, before Stubmore's bustling interference, a sum sufficient to replace what had been fraudulently taken—he might easily manage, he thought, to prevent the forgery ever becoming known. Nay, if Stubmore, roused into strict personal investigation, by the new Power of Attorney, which a new investment in the Bank would render necessary, should ascertain what had occurred, his liabilities being now indemnified, and the money replaced, Varney thought he could confidently rely on his *old* fellow-pupil's assent to wink at the forgery, and hush up the matter. But this was his only chance. How was the money to be gained? He thought of Helen's fortune, and the last scruple gave way to the imminence of his peril, and the urgency of his fears.

With this decision, he repaired to Lucretia, whose concurrence was necessary to his designs. Long habits of crime had now deepened still more

the dark and stern colour of that dread woman's sombre nature. But through all that had ground the humanity from her soul, one human sentiment, fearfully tainted and adulterated as it was, still struggled for life—the memory of the mother. It was by this, her least criminal emotion, that Varney led her to the worst of her crimes. He offered to sell out the remainder of the trust-money by a fresh act of forgery—to devote such proceeds to the search for her lost Vincent; he revived the hopes she had long since gloomily relinquished, till she began to conceive the discovery easy and certain. He then brought before her the prospect of that son's succession to Laughton—but two lives now between him and those broad lands—those two lives, associated with just cause of revenge!—*two* lives! Lucretia, till then, did not know that Susan had left a child—that a pledge of those nuptials, to which she imputed all her infamy, existed to revive a jealousy never extinguished, appeal to the hate that had grown out of her love. More readily than Varney had anticipated, and with fierce exultation, she fell into his horrible schemes.

Thus had she returned to England, and claimed the guardianship of her niece. Varney engaged a dull house in the suburb, and looking out for a servant, not likely to suspect and betray, found the nurse who had watched over his uncle's last illness; but Lucretia, according to her invariable practice, rejected all menial accomplices—reposed no confidence in the tools of her black deeds. Feigning an infirmity that would mock all suspicion of the hand that mixed the draught, and the step that stole to the slumber, she defied the justice of earth, and stood alone under the omniscience of heaven.

Various considerations had delayed

the execution of the atrocious deed so coldly contemplated. Lucretia herself drew back; perhaps more daunted by conscience than she herself was distinctly aware,—and disguising her scruples in those yet fouler refinements of hoped revenge which her conversations with Varney have betrayed to the reader. The failure of the earlier researches for the lost Vincent, the suspended activity of Stubmore, left the more impatient murderer leisure to make the acquaintance of St. John, steal into the confidence of Helen, and render the insurances on the life of the latter less open to suspicion than if effected immediately on her entrance into that shamle-house, and before she could be supposed to form that affection for her aunt which made probable so tender a forethought. These causes of delay now vanished, the Parcæ closed the abrupt woof, and lifted the impending shears.

Lucretia had long since dropped the name of Braddell. She shrank from proclaiming those second sponsals,

sullied by the degradation to which they had exposed her, and the suspicions implied on the inquest on her husband, until the hour for acknowledging her son should arrive. She resumed, therefore, the name of Dalibard, and by that we will continue to call her. Nor was Varney uninfluential in dissuading her from proclaiming her second marriage till occasion necessitated. If the son were discovered, and the proofs of his birth in the keeping of himself and his accomplice, his avarice naturally suggested the expediency of wringing from that son some pledge of adequate reward on succession to an inheritance which they alone could secure to him: out of this fancied fund, not only Grabman, but his employer, was to be paid. The concealment of the identity between Mrs. Braddell and Madame Dalibard might facilitate such an arrangement. This idea Varney locked as yet in his own breast. He did not dare to speak to Lucretia of the bargain he ultimately meditated with her son.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. GRABMAN'S ADVENTURES.

THE lackeys in their dress-liveries stood at the porch of Laughton, as the postilions drove rapidly along the road, sweeping through venerable groves tinged with the hues of autumn, up to that stately pile. From the window of the large cumbersome vehicle, which Percival, mindful of Madame Dalibard's infirmity, had hired for her special accommodation, Lucretia looked keenly forth. On the slope of the hill grouped the deer, and below, where the lake gleamed, the swan rested on the wave. Farther on to the left, gaunt and stag-headed, rose, living still, from the depth of the glen, Guy's memorable oak. Coming now in sight, though at a distance, the grey church tower emerged from the surrounding masses of solemn foliage. Suddenly, the road curves round, and straight before her (the rooks cawing above the turrets, the sun reflected from the vanes) Lucretia gazes on the halls of Laughton. And didst thou not, O Guy's oak, murmur warning from thine oracular hollows? And thou, who sleepest below the church tower, didst thou not turn, Miles St. John, in thy grave, when, with such tender care, the young Lord of Laughton bore that silent guest across his threshold, and with credulous, moistened eyes, welcomed Treason and Murder to his hearth?

There, at the porch, paused Helen gazing with the rapt eye of the poetess on the broad landscape, chequered by the vast shadows cast from the setting sun. There, too, by her side, lingered Varney, with an

artist's eye for the stately scene, till a thought, not of art, changed the face of the earth, and the view without mirrored back the Golgotha of his soul.

Leave them thus—we must hurry on.

One day a traveller stopped his gig at a public house in a village in Lancashire. He chucked the rein to the ostler, and in reply to a question what oats should be given to the horse, said—"Hay and water—the beast is on job." Then sauntering to the bar, he called for a glass of raw brandy for himself; and while the host drew the spirit forth from the tap, he asked, carelessly, if, some years ago, a woman of the name of Joplin had not resided in the village.

"It is strange," said the host, musingly.

"What is strange?"

"Why, we have just had a gent, asking the same question. I have only been here nine year come December, but my old ostler was born in the village, and never left it. So the gent had in the ostler, and he is now gone into the village to pick up what else he can learn."

This intelligence seemed to surprise and displease the traveller. "What the deuce," he muttered, "does Jason mistrust me? Has he set another dog on the scent? Humph!" He drained off his brandy, and sallied forth to confer with the ostler.

"Well, my friend," said Mr. Grabman, for the traveller was no other than that worthy—"well, so you

remember Mrs. Joplin, more than twenty years ago—eh?”

“Yees, I guess; more than twenty years since she left the *Pleck*.”*

“Ah, she seems to have been a restless body—she had a child with her!”

“Yees, I moind that.”

“And I dare say you heard her say the child was not her own, that she was paid well for it, eh?”

“Noa; my missus did not loike me to chaffer much with neighbour Joplin, for she was but a bad ‘un—pretty fease, too. She lived agin the *woght*† yonder, where you see that gent coming out.”

“Oho! that is the gent who was asking after Mrs. Joplin?”

“Yes; and he giv’ me half-a-croon!” said the clever ostler, holding out his hand.

Mr. Grabman, too thoughtful, too jealous of his rival, to take the hint at that moment, darted off, as fast as his thin legs could carry him, towards the unwelcome interferer in his own business.

Approaching the gentleman—a tall, powerful-looking young man—he somewhat softened his tone, and mechanically touched his hat as he said—

“What, sir, are you, too, in search of Mrs. Joplin?”

“Sir, I am,” answered the young man, eyeing Grabman deliberately, “and you, I suppose, are the person I have found before me on the same search—first, at Liverpool; next, at C——, about fifteen miles from that town; thirdly, at L——; and now we meet here. You have had the start of me. What have you learned?”

Mr. Grabman smiled: “Softly, sir, softly. May I first ask, (since open questioning seems the order of the day,) whether I have the honour to address a brother practitioner

—one of the law, sir—one of the law?”

“I am one of the law.”

Mr. Grabman bowed and sewled.

“And may I make bold to ask the name of your client?”

“Certainly, you may ask. Every man has a right to ask what he pleases, in a civil way.”

“But you’ll not answer? Deep! Oh, I understand! Very good. But I am deep too, sir. You know Mr. Varney, I suppose?”

The gentleman looked surprised. His bushy brows met over his steady, sagacious eyes; but after a moment’s pause, the expression of the face cleared up.

“It is as I thought,” he said half to himself. “Who else could have had an interest in similar inquiries?”

“Sir,” he added, with a quick and decided tone, “you are, doubtless, employed by Mr. Varney on behalf of Madame Dalibard, and in search of evidence connected with the loss of an unhappy infant. I am on the same quest, and for the same end. The interests of your client are mine. Two heads are better than one; let us unite our ingenuity and endeavours.”

“And share the *pec*, I suppose?” said Grabman drily, buttoning up his pockets.

“Whatever fee you may expect, you will have, anyhow, whether I assist you or not. I expect no fee—for mine is a personal interest, which I serve gratuitously; but I can undertake to promise you, on my own part, more than the ordinary professional reward for your co-operation.”

“Well, sir,” said Grabman, mollified, “you speak very much like a gentleman. My feelings were hurt at first, I own. I am hasty, but I can listen to reason. Will you walk back with me to the house you have just left? and suppose we then turn in and

* *Pleck*,—Lancashire and Yorkshire, synonym for *place*.

† *Anglice*,—*wall*.

have a chop together, and compare notes."

"Willingly!" answered the tall stranger, and the two inquisitors amicably joined company. The result of their inquiries was not, however, very satisfactory. No one knew whither Mrs. Joplin had gone, though all agreed it was in company with a man of bad character and vagrant habits—all agreed, too, in the vague recollection of the child, and some remembered that it was dressed in clothes finer than would have been natural to an infant legally and filially appertaining to Mrs. Joplin. One old woman remembered, that on her reproaching Mrs. Joplin for some act of great cruelty to the poor babe, she replied that it was not her flesh and blood, and that if she had not expected more than she had got, she would never have undertaken the charge. On comparing the information gleaned at the previous places of their research, they found an entire agreement as to the character personally borne by Mrs. Joplin. At the village to which their inquiry had been first directed, she was known as a respectable, precise young woman, one of a small congregation of rigid dissenters. She had married a member of the sect, and borne him a child, which died two weeks after birth. She was then seen nursing another infant—though how she came by it, none knew. Shortly, after this, her husband, a journeyman carpenter of good repute, died: but to the surprise of the neighbours, Mrs. Joplin continued to live as comfortably as before, and seemed not to miss the wages of her husband; nay, she rather now, as if before kept back by the prudence of the deceased, launched into a less thrifty mode of life, and a gaiety of dress at variance both with the mourning her recent loss should have imposed, and the austere tenets of her sect. This inde-

corum excited angry curiosity, and drew down stern remonstrance. Mrs. Joplin, in apparent disgust at this intermeddling with her affairs, withdrew from the village to a small town, about twenty miles distant, and there set up a shop. But her moral lapse became now confirmed; her life was notoriously abandoned, and her house the resort of all the reprobates of the place. Whether her means began to be exhausted, or the scandal she provoked attracted the notice of the magistrates, and imposed a check on her course, was not very certain, but she sold off her goods suddenly, and was next tracked to the village in which Mr. Grabman met his new coadjutor; and there, though her conduct was less flagrant and her expenses less reckless, she made but a very unfavourable impression, which was confirmed by her flight with an itinerant hawker of the lowest possible character. Seated over their port wine, the two gentlemen compared their experiences, and consulted on the best mode of remedying the broken thread of their research; when Mr. Grabman said, coolly, "But, after all, I think it most likely that we are not on the right scent. This bantling may not be the one we search for."

"Be not misled by that doubt. To arrive at the evidence we desire, we must still track this wretched woman."

"You are certain of that?"

"Certain."

"Hem! Did you ever hear of a Mr. Walter Ardworth?"

"Yes; what of him?"

"Why, he can best tell us where to look for the child."

"I am sure he would counsel as I do."

"You know him, then?"

"I do."

"What!—he lives still?"

"I hope so."

"Can you bring me across him?"

"If necessary."

"And that young man, who goes by his name, brought up by Mr. Fielden?"

"Well, sir?"

"Is he not the son of Mr. Braddell?"

The stranger was silent, and, shading his face with his hand, seemed buried in thought. He then rose, took up his candle, and said quietly—

"Sir, I wish you good evening. I have letters to write in my own room. I will consider by to-morrow, if you stay till then, whether we can really aid each other farther, or whether we should pursue our researches separately." With these words, he closed the door; and Mr. Grabman remained baffled and bewildered.

However, he too had a letter to write; so, calling for pen, ink, and paper, and a pint of brandy, he indited his complaints and his news to Varney:

"Jason" (he began), "are you playing me false? Have you set another man on the track with a view to bilk me of my promised fee?—Explain, or I throw up the business."

Herewith, Mr. Grabman gave a minute description of the stranger, and related pretty accurately what had passed between that gentleman and himself. He then added the progress of his own inquiries, and renewed, as peremptorily as he dared, his demand for candour and plain dealing. Now, it so happened, that in stumbling up stairs to bed, Mr. Grabman passed the room in which his mysterious fellow-seeker was lodged, and, as is the usage in hostels, a pair of boots stood outside the door, to be cleaned betimes in the morning. Though somewhat drunk, Grabman still preserved the rays of his habitual astuteness. A clever, and a natural idea, shot across his brain, illuminating the fumes of the

brandy; he stooped, and while one hand on the wall steadied his footing, with the other he fished up a boot, and peering within, saw legibly written—"John Ardworth, Esq., Gray's Inn." At that sight, he felt what a philosopher feels at the sudden elucidation of a troublesome problem. Down-stairs again tottered Grabman, re-opened his letter, and wrote—"P.S.—I have wronged you, Jason, by my suspicions; never mind —*Jubilate!* This interloper, who made me so jealous—who, think you, it is? Why, young Ardworth himself—that is, the lad who goes by such name. Now, is it not clear?—of course, no one else has such interest in learning his birth as the lost child himself—Here he is! If old Ardworth lives (as he says), old Ardworth has set him to work on his own business. But then, that Fielden—rather a puzzler that! Yet, no;—now, I understand—old Ardworth gave the boy to Mrs. Joplin, and took it away from her again when he went to the parson's. Now, certainly, it may be quite necessary to prove—first, that the boy he took from Mr. Braddell's he gave to Mrs. Joplin; secondly, that the boy he left with Mr. Fielden, was the same that he took again from that woman—therefore, the necessity of finding out Mother Joplin, an essential witness: Q. E. D., Master Jason!"

It was not till the sun had been some hours risen that Mr. Grabman imitated that luminary's example. When he did so, he found, somewhat to his chagrin, that John Ardworth had long been gone. In fact, whatever the motive that had led the latter on the search, he had succeeded in gleaning from Grabman all that that person could communicate, and their interview had inspired him with such disgust of the attorney, and so small an opinion of the value of his co-operation (in which last belief,

perhaps, he was mistaken) that he had resolved to continue his inquiries alone, and had already, in his early morning's walk through the village, ascertained that the man with whom Mrs. Joplin had quitted the place, had some time after been sentenced to six months imprisonment in the county gaol. Possibly the prison authorities might know something to lead to his discovery ; and through him the news of his paramour might be gained.

CHAPTER XX.

MORE OF MRS. JOPLIN.

ONE day at the hour of noon, the court boasting the tall residence of Mr. Grabman was startled from the quiet usually reigning there at broad daylight, by the appearance of two men, evidently no inhabitants of the place. The squalid, ill-favoured denizens lounging before the doors, stared hard; and, at the fuller view of one of the men, most of them retreated hastily within. Then, in those houses, you might have heard a murmur of consternation and alarm. The ferret was in the burrow—a Bow-street officer in the court! The two men paused, looked round, and, stopping before the dingy tower-like house, selected the bell which appealed to the inmates of the ground-floor, to the left. At that summons Bill the cracksman imprudently presented a full view of his countenance through his barred window; he drew it back with astonishing celerity; but not in time to escape the eye of the Bow-street runner.

"Open the door, Bill—there's nothing to fear—I have no summons against you, 'pon honour. You know I never deceive. Why should I? Open the door, I say!"

No answer.

The officer tapped with his cane at the foul window.

"Bill! there's a gentleman who comes to you for information, and he will pay for it handsomely."

Bill again appeared at the casement, and peeped forth, very cautiously, through the bars.

"Bless my vitals, Mr. R——! and

it is you, is it? What were you saying about 'paying handsomely?'"

"That your evidence is wanted—not against a pal, man. It will hurt no one, and put at least five guineas in your pocket."

"Ten guineas!" said the Bow-street officer's companion.

"You be's a man of 'onor, Mr. R——!" said Bill, emphatically; "and I scorns to doubt you—so here goes."

With that, he withdrew from the window, and in another minute or so the door was opened, and Bill, with a superb bow, asked his visitors into his room.

In the interval, leisure had been given to the cracksman to remove all trace of the wonted educational employment of his hopeful children. The urchins were seated on the floor, playing at push-pin; and the Bow-street officer benignly patted a pair of curly heads as he passed them, drew a chair to the table, and, wiping his forehead, sat down, quite at home. Bill then deliberately seated himself, and, unbuttoning his waistcoat, permitted the butt-ends of a brace of pistols to be seen by his guests. Mr. R.'s companion seemed very unmoved by this significant action. He bent one inquiring steady look on the cracksman, which, as Bill afterwards said, went through him "like a gimblet through a panny," and, taking out a purse, through the network of which the sovereigns gleamed pleasantly, placed it on the table, and said:

"This purse is yours, if you will tell me what has become of a woman named Joplin, with whom you left the village of —, in Lancashire, in the year 18—."

"And," put in Mr. R—, "the gentleman wants to know, with no view of harming the woman. It will be to her own advantage to inform where she is."

"'Pon honour, again?" said Bill.

"'Pon honour!"

"Well, then, I has a heart in my buzzom, and if so be I can do a good turn to the 'oman wot I has loved—and kep company with,—why not?"

"Why not, indeed?" said Mr. R—. "And as we want to learn, not only what has become of Mrs. Joplin, but what she did with the child she carried off from —, begin at the beginning, and tell us all you know."

Bill mused.

"How much is there in the pus?"

"Eighteen sovereigns."

"Make it twenty—you nod,—twenty then?—a bargain! Now, I'll go on right a-head. You sees as how, some months arter we—that is, Peggy Joplin and self, left —, I was put in quod in Lancaster gaol—so I lost sight of the blowen. When I got out, and came to Lunnun—it was a matter of seven year, afore, all of a sudding, I came bang up agin her—at the corner of Common Garden. 'Why, Bill!' says she. 'Why Peggy!' says I—and we buss'd each other like winky. 'Shall us come together agin?' says she. 'Why, no,' says I—'I has a wife wots a good un—and gets her bread by setting up as a widder with seven small childern! By-the-by, Peg, what's a come of your brat?'—for as you says, Sir, Peg had a child put out to her to nurse. Lor! how she cuffed it! 'The brat!' says she, laughing like mad—'Oh, I got rid o' that, when you were in jail, Bill.' 'As how?' says I. 'Why there

was a woman begging agin St. Poll's churchyard—so I purtended to see a frind at a distance—'old the babby a moment,' says I, puffing and panting—'while I ketches my friend yonder.' So she 'olds the brat, and I never sees it agin;—and there's an ind of the bother!' 'But won't they ever ax for the child—them as giv' it you?' 'Oh no,' says Peg, 'they left it too long for that, and all the tin was a-gone; and one mouth is hard enough to feed in these days!—let by other folks' bantlings.' 'Well,' says I, 'where do you hang out? I'll pop in, in a friendly way.' So she tells me—som'are in Lambeth (I forgets hexactly)—and many's the good piece of work we ha' done togeth'er."

"And where is she now?"—asked Mr. R—'s companion.

"I doesn't know purcisey, but I can com' at her: you see, when my poor wife died, four year com' Christmas, and left me with as fine a family, tho' I says it, as h-od King Georgy himself walked afore, with his gold-headed cane, on the terris at Vin Isor—all heights and all hages, to the babby in arms (for the littel un there warn't above a year old, and had been a-brought up upon spoon meat, with a dash o' blue-ruin to make him slim and ginteel;) as for the bigger uns wot you don't see, they be doin' well in forin parts, Mr. R—!"

Mr. R— smiled, significantly.

Bill resumed. "Where was I? Oh, when my wife died, I wanted sun un to take care of the childern, so I takes Peg into the 'ous. But Lor! how she farrapped 'em—she has a cruel heart—hasn't she Bob? Bob is a cute child, Mr. R—. Just as I was a-thinking of turning her out neck an' crop, a gemman what lodges aloft, wot be a laryer, and wot had just saved my nick, Mr. R—, by proving a h-alibi, said 'That's a tidy body, your Peg!' (for you see he was often a wisiting here, an' h-indeed, sin' thin, he has

taken our third floor, No. 9) 'I've bin a speakin' to her, and I find she has been a nus to the sick. I has a frind wots a h-uncle that's ill, can you spare her, Bill, to attend him?' 'That I can,' says I, 'anything to obleedge.' So Peg packs off—bag and baggidge."

"And what was the sick gentleman's name?" asked Mr. R.'s companion.

"It was one Mr. Warney—a painter, wot lived at Clap'am. Since thin I've lost sight of Peg; for we had igh words about the childern,—and she's a spiteful 'oman. But you can larn where she be at Mr. Warney's—if so be he's still above-ground."

"And did this woman still go by the name of Joplin?"

Bill grinned: "She warn't such a spooney as that—that name was in your blaek books too much, Mr. R—— for a 'spectable nuss for sick bodies: no, she was then called Martha Skeggs, what was her own mother's name afore marridge. Anything more, gemmen?"

"I am satisfied," said the younger visitor, rising; "there is the purse, and Mr. R—— will bring you ten sovereigns in addition. Good-day to you."

Bill, with superabundant bows and flourishes, showed his visitors out, and then, in high glee, he began to romp with his children; and the

whole family circle was in a state of uproarious enjoyment, when the door flew open, and in entered Grabman, his brief-bag in hand, dust-soiled, and unshaven.

"Aha, neighbour! your servant—your servant,—just come back!—always so merry—for the life of me, I couldn't help looking in! Dear me, Bill! why, you're in luck!" and Mr. Grabman pointed to a pile of sovereigns which Bill had emptied from the purse to count over, and weigh on the tip of his forefinger.

"Yes," said Bill, sweeping the gold into his corderoy pocket; "and who do you think brought me these shiners? Why, who but old Peggy, the 'oman wot you put out at Clap'am."

"Well, never mind Peggy, now, Bill; I want to ask you what you have done with Margaret Joplin—whom, sly seducer that you are, you carried off from——"

"Why, man, Peggy be Joplin, and Joplin be Peggy!—and it's for that piece of noos that I got all them pretty new pieters of his majesty, Bill—my namesake, God bliss 'im!"

"D——n," exclaimed Grabman, aghast—"the young chap's spoiling my game again!" And seizing up his brief-bag, he darted out of the house, in the hope to arrive, at least, at Clapham before his competitors.

CHAPTER XXI.

BECK'S DISCOVERY.

UNDER the cedar trees, at Laughton, sate that accursed and abhorrent being, who sate there young, impassioned, hopeful, as Lueretia Clavering—under the old cedar trees, which, save that their vast branches cast an imperceptibly broader shade over the mossy sward, the irrevocable winters had left the same. Where, through the nether boughs, the autumn sunbeams came aslant, the windows, enriched by many a haughty sentcheon, shone brightly against the western rays. From the flower-beds in the quaint garden near at hand, the fresh yet tranquil air wafted faint perfumes from the lingering heliotrope and fading rose. The peacock perched dozingly on the heavy balustrade; the blithe robin hopped busily along the sun-track on the lawn; in the distance the tinkling bells of the flock, the plaining low of some wandering heifer, while, breaking the silence, seemed still to blend with the repose. All images around lent themselves to complete that picture of stately calm, which is the character of those old mansion houses, which owner after owner has loved, and heeded,—leaving to them the graces of antiquity, guarding them from the desolation of decay.

Alone sate Lueretia, under the cedar trees, and her heart made dismal contrast to the noble tranquillity that breathed around. From whatever softening or repentant emotions which the scene of her youth might first have awakened—from whatever of less unholy anguish which memory might have caused, when she first,

once more, sate under those remembered boughs, and, as a voice from a former world, some faint whisper of youthful love sighed across the waste and ashes of her devastated soul,—from all such rekindled humanities in the past she had now, with gloomy power, wrenched herself away. Crime, such as hers, admits not long the *sentiment* that softens the remorse of gentler error. If there wakes one moment from the past the warning and melancholy ghost, soon from that abyss rises the Fury with the lifted scourge, and hunts on the frantic footsteps towards the future. In the future, the haggard intellect of crime must live; must involve itself mechanically in webs and meshes, and lose past and present in the welcome atmosphere of darkness.

Thus, while Lueretia sate, and her eyes rested upon the halls of her youth, her mind overleapt the gulf that yet yawned between her and the object on which she was bent. Already, in fancy, that home was hers again;—its present possessor swept away, the interloping race of Vernon, ending in one of those abrupt lines familiar to genealogists, which branch out busily from the main tree, as if all pith and sap were monopolised by them, continue for a single generation, and then shrink into a printer's bracket, with the formal laconism, 'Died without issue.' Back, then, in the pedigree would turn the eye of some curious descendant, and see the race continue in the posterity of Lueretia Clavering.

With all her ineffable vices, mere cupidity had not, as we have often seen, been a main characteristic of this fearful woman; and in her design to endow, by the most determined guilt, her son with the heritage of her ancestors, she had hitherto looked but little to mere mercenary advantages for herself; but now, in the sight of that venerable and broad domain, a covetousness, absolute in itself, broke forth. Could she have gained it for her own use, rather than her son's, she would have felt a greater zest in her ruthless purpose. She looked upon the scene as a deposed monarch upon his usurped realm; it was her right. The early sense of possession in that inheritance returned to her. Reluctantly would she even yield her claims to her child. Here, too, in this atmosphere she tasted once more what had long been lost to her—the luxury of that dignified respect which surrounds the well-born. Here, she ceased to be the suspected adventuress, the friendless outcast, the needy wrestler with hostile fortune, the skulking enemy of the law. She rose at once, and without effort, to her original state—the honoured daughter of an illustrious house. The homeliest welcome that greeted her from some aged but unforgotten villager, the salutation of homage, the bated breath of humble reverence—even trifles like these were dear to her, and made her the more resolute to retain them. In her calm, relentless, onward vision, she saw herself enshrined in those halls, ruling in the delegated authority of her son, safe evermore from prying suspicion and degrading need, and miserable guilt for miserable objects. Here, but one great crime, and she resumed the majesty of her youth! While thus dwelling on the future, her eye did not even turn from those sunlit towers to the forms below, and more immediately inviting its survey.

On the very spot where, at the opening of this tale, sate Sir Miles St. John, sharing his attention between his dogs and his guest,—sate now Helen Mainwaring; against the balustrade, where had lounged Charles Vernon, leant Percival St. John; and in the same place where he had stationed himself that eventful evening, to distort, in his malignant sketch, the features of his father, Gabriel Varney, with almost the same smile of irony on his lips, was engaged in transferring to his canvas a more faithful likeness of the heir's intended bride. Helen's countenance, indeed, exhibited comparatively but little of the ravages which the pernicious aliment, administered so noiselessly, made upon the frame. The girl's eye, it is true, had sunk, and there was a languid heaviness in its look; but the contour of the cheek was so naturally rounded, and the features so delicately fine, that the fall of the muscles was less evident; and the bright warm hue of the complexion, and the pearly sparkle of the teeth, still gave a fallacious freshness to the aspect. But, as yet, the poisoners had forborne those ingredients which invade the springs of life, resorting only to such as undermine the health, and prepare the way to unsuspected graves. Out of the infernal variety of the materials at their command, they had selected a mixture which works by sustaining perpetual fever! which gives little pain, little suffering, beyond that of lassitude and thirst; which wastes like consumption, and yet puzzles the physician, by betraying few or none of its ordinary symptoms. But the disorder, as yet, was not incurable—its progress would gradually cease with the discontinuance of the venom.

Although October was far advanced, the day was as mild and warm as August. But Percival, who had been watching Helen's countenance, with

the anxiety of love and fear, now proposed that the sitting should be adjourned. The sun was declining, and it was certainly no longer safe for Helen to be exposed to the air without exercise. He proposed that they should walk through the garden, and Helen, rising cheerfully, placed her hand on his arm. But she had scarcely descended the steps of the terrace when she stopped short, and breathed hard and painfully. The spasm was soon over, and, walking slowly on, they passed Lucretia with a brief word or two, and were soon out of sight amongst the cedars.

"Lean more on my arm, Helen," said Percival. "How strange it is, that the change of air has done so little for you, and our country doctor still less! I should feel miserable, indeed, if Simmons, whom my mother always considered very clever, did not assure me that there was no ground for alarm—that these symptoms were only nervous. Cheer up, Helen—sweet love, cheer up!"

Helen raised her face, and strove to smile, but the tears stood in her eyes: "It would be hard to die now, Percival!" she said, flatteringly.

"To die—oh, Helen! No; we must not stay here longer—the air is certainly too keen for you. Perhaps your aunt will go to Italy—why not all go there, and seek my mother? And she will nurse you, Helen,—and—and——" He could not trust his voice farther.

Helen pressed his arm tenderly: "Forgive me, dear Percival—it is but at moments that I feel so despondent—now, again, it is past. Ah, I so long to see your mother! when will you hear from her? Are you not too sanguine?—do you really feel sure she will consent to so lowly a choice?"

"Never doubt her affection—her appreciation of you," answered Percival, gladly and hoping that Helen's

natural anxiety might be the latent cause of her dejected spirits: "often when talking of the future, under these very cedars, my mother has said—'You have no cause to marry for ambition—marry only for your happiness.' She never had a daughter—in return for all her love, I shall give her that blessing."

Thus talking, the lovers rambled on till the sun set, and then, returning to the house, they found that Varney and Madame Dalibard had preceded them. That evening Helen's spirits rose to their natural buoyancy. And Percival's heart was once more set at ease by her silvery laugh.

When, at their usual early hour, the rest of the family retired to sleep, Percival remained in the drawing-room to write again, and at length, to Lady Mary and Captain Greville. While thus engaged, his valet entered, to say, that Beck, who had been out since the early morning, in search of a horse that had strayed from one of the pastures, had just returned with the animal, who had wandered nearly as far as Southampton.

"I am glad to hear it," said Percival, abstractedly, and continuing his letter.

The valet still lingered—Percival looked up in surprise.

"If you please, sir, you said you particularly wished to see Beck, when he came back."

"I—oh, true! Tell him to wait. I will speak to him by and by—you need not sit up for me—let Beck attend to the bell."

The valet withdrew. Percival continued his letter, and filled page after page, and sheet after sheet; and when at length the letters, not containing a tithe of what he wished to convey, were brought to a close, he fell into a reverie that lasted till the candles burnt low, and the clock from the turret tolled one. Starting up in surprise at the lapse of time, Percival

then, for the first time, remembered Beck, and rung the bell.

The *ci-devant* sweepster, in his smart livery, appeared at the door.

"Beck, my poor fellow, I am ashamed to have kept you waiting so long; but I received a letter this morning which relates to you. Let me see, I left it in my study upstairs. Ah—you'll never find the way—follow me—I have some questions to put to you."

"Nothin' agin my carakter, I hopes, your 'onor," said Beck, timidly.

"Oh, no!"

"Noos of the matriss, then?" exclaimed Beck, joyfully.

"Nor that either," answered Percival, laughing, as he lighted the chamber candlestick, and followed by Beck, ascended the grand staircase to a small room which, as it adjoined his sleeping apartment, he had habitually used as his morning writing-room and study.

Percival had, indeed, received that day a letter which had occasioned him much surprise; it was from John Ardworth, and ran thus:—

"My dear Percival,—It seems that you have taken into your service a young man known only by the name of Beck. Is he now with you at Laughton? If so, pray retain him, and suffer him to be in readiness to come to me at a day's notice if wanted, though it is probable enough that I may rather come to you. At present, strange as it may seem to you, I am detained in London by business connected with that important personage. Will you ask him carelessly, as it were, in the meanwhile, the following questions:

"First: How did he become possessed of a certain child's coral, which he left at the house of one Becky Carruthers, in Cole's-buildings?

"Secondly: Is he aware of any mark on his arm—if so, will he describe it?

"Thirdly: How long has he known the said Becky Carruthers?

"Fourthly: Does he believe her to be honest, and truthful?

"Take a memorandum of his answers, and send it to me. I am pretty well aware of what they are likely to be; but I desire you to put the questions that I may judge if there be any discrepancy between his statement and that of Mrs. Carruthers. I have much to tell you, and am eager to receive your kind congratulations upon an event that has given me more happiness than the fugitive success of my little book. Tenderest regards to Helen; and, hoping soon to see you, ever affectionately yours.

"P.S.—Say not a word of the contents of this letter to Madame Dalibard, Helen, or to any one except Beck. Caution him to the same discretion. If you can't trust to his silence, send him to town."

When the post brought this letter, Beck was already gone on his errand, and after puzzling himself with vague conjectures, Percival's mind had been naturally too absorbed with his anxieties for Helen to recur much to the subject.

Now, refreshing his memory with the contents of the letter, he drew pen and ink before him, put the questions *seriatim*, noted down the answers as desired, and smiling at Beck's frightened curiosity to know who could possibly care about such matters, and feeling confident (from that very fright) of his discretion, dismissed the groom to his repose.

Beck had never been in that part of the house before; and when he got into the corridor, he became bewildered, and knew not which turn to take—the right or the left. He had no candle with him; but the moon came clear through a high and wide skylight; the light, however, gave him no guide. While pausing, much

perplexed, and not sure that he should even know again the door of the room he had just quitted, if venturing to apply to his young master for a clue through such a labyrinth, he was inexpressibly startled and appalled by a sudden apparition. A door at one end of the corridor opened noiselessly, and a figure, at first scarcely distinguishable, for it was robed from head to foot in a black, shapeless garb, scarcely giving even the outline of the human form, stole forth. Beck rubbed his eyes, and crept, mechanically, close within the recess of one of the doors that communicated with the passage. The figure advanced a few steps towards him; and what words can describe his astonishment, when he beheld thus erect, and in full possession of physical power and motion, the palsied cripple whose chair he had often seen wheeled into the garden, and whose unhappy state was the common topic of comment in the servants' hall. Yes, the moon from above shone full upon that face which never, once seen, could be forgotten. And it seemed more than mortally stern and pale, contrasted with the sable of the strange garb, and beheld by that mournful light. Had a ghost, indeed, risen from the dead, it could scarcely have appalled him more. Madame Dalibard did not see the involuntary spy; for the recess in which he had crept, was on that side of the wall on which the moon's shadow was cast. With a quick step, she turned into another room, opposite that which she had quitted, the door of which stood ajar, and vanished noiselessly as she had appeared.

Taught suspicion by his earlier acquaintance with the "night-side" of human nature, Beck had good cause for it here—this detection of an imposture most familiar to his experience—that of a pretended cripple—the hour of the night—the

evil expression on the face of the deceitful guest—Madame Dalibard's familiar intimacy and near connection with Varney—Varney the visitor to Grabman, who received no visitors but those who desire not to go to law, but to escape from its penalties—Varney, who had dared to brave the Resurrection Man in his den,—and who seemed so fearlessly at home in abodes where nought but poverty could protect the honest,—Varney now, with that strange woman, an inmate of a house in which the master was so young, so inexperienced—so liable to be duped by his own generous nature—all these ideas vaguely combined inspired Beck with as vague a terror; surely something, he knew not what, was about to be perpetrated against his benefactor—some scheme of villany which it was his duty to detect. He breathed hard—formed his resolves, and, stealing on tiptoe, followed the shadowy form of the poisoner through the half-opened doorway. The shutters of the room of which he thus crossed the threshold—were not closed—the moon shone in, bright and still. He kept his body behind the door—peeping in—with straining fearful stare. He saw Madame Dalibard standing beside a bed, round which the curtains were closed—standing for a moment or so motionless, and as if in the act of listening, with one hand on a table beside the bed. He then saw her take from the folds of her dress something white and glittering, and pour from it, what appeared to him but a drop or two—cautiously, slowly—into a phial on the table, from which she withdrew the stopper: that done, she left the phial where she had found it—again paused a moment, and turned towards the door. Beck retreated hastily to his former hiding-place, and gained it in time. Again the shadowy form passed him

and again the white face in the white moonlight froze his blood with its fell and horrible expression. He remained cowering and shrinking against the wall for some time, striving to collect his wits, and considering what he should do. His first thought was to go at once and inform St. John of what he had witnessed. But the poor have a proverbial dread of deposing aught against a superior. Madame Dalibard would deny his tale—the guest would be believed against the menial—he should be but dismissed with ignominy. At that idea, he left his hiding-place, and crept along the corridor, in the hope of finding some passage at the end which might lead to the offices. But when he arrived at the other extremity, he was only met by great folding doors, which evidently communicated with the state apartments. He must retrace his steps—he did so—and when he came to the door which Madame Dalibard had entered, and which still stood ajar, he had recovered some courage, and with courage, curiosity seized him. For what purpose could the strange woman seek that room at night thus feloniously—what could she have poured and with such stealthy caution into the phial? Naturally and suddenly the idea of poison flashed across him. Tales of such crime (as indeed of all crime) had necessarily often thrilled the ear of the vagrant fellow-lodger with burglars and outlaws. But poison to whom? Could it be meant for his benefactor? Could St. John sleep in that room?—why not? The woman had sought the chamber before her young host had retired to rest, and mingled her potion with some medicinal draught. All fear vanished before the notion of danger to his employer. He stole at once through the doorway, and noiselessly approached the table on which yet lay the phial. His hand closed on it firmly. He resolved to carry it away, and consider next morning what next to do. At all events, it might contain some proof to back his tale and justify his suspicions. When he came once more into the corridor, he made a quick rush onwards, and luckily arrived at the staircase. There, the blood-red stains reflected on the stone-floors from the blazoned casements, daunted him little less than the sight at which his hair still bristled. He scarcely drew breath till he had got into his own little crib, in the wing set apart for the stablemen, when, at length, he fell into broken and agitated sleep, the visions of all that had successively disturbed him waking, united confusedly, as in one picture of gloom and terror. He thought that he was in his old loft in St. Giles's; that the Gravestealer was wrestling with Varney for his body, while he himself, lying powerless on his pallet, fancied he should be safe so long as he could retain, as a talisman, his child's coral, which he clasped to his heart. Suddenly, in that black shapeless garb in which he had beheld her Madame Dalibard bent over him, with her stern colourless face, and wrenched from him his charm. Then ceasing his struggle with his horrible antagonist, Varney laughed aloud, and the Gravestealer seized him in his deadly arms.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TAPESTRY CHAMBER.

WHEN Beck woke the next morning, and gradually recalled all that had so startled and appalled him the previous night—the grateful creature felt less by the process of reason than by a brute instinct, that in the mysterious resuscitation and nocturnal wanderings of the pretended paralytic, some danger menaced his master—he became anxious to learn whether it was really St. John's room Madame Dalibard stealthily visited. A bright idea struck him—and in the course of the day, at an hour when the family were out of doors, he contrived to coax the good-natured valet, who had taken him under his special protection, to show him over the house. He had heard the other servants say there was such a power of fine things, that a peep into the rooms was as good as a show, and the valet felt pride in being *cicerone* even to Beck. After having stared sufficiently at the banquet-hall and the drawing-room, the armour, the busts, and the pictures, and listened, open-mouthed, to his guide's critical observations, Beck was led up the great stairs into the old family picture-gallery, and into Sir Miles's ancient room at the end, which had been left undisturbed, with the bed still in the angle; on returning thence, Beck found himself in the corridor which communicated with the principal bed-rooms, in which he had lost himself the night before.

"And vot room be that vith the littul vite head h over the door?" asked Beck, pointing to the chamber from which Madame Dalibard had emerged.

"That white head, Master Beck, is Floorer the gooidess; but a heathen like you knows nothing about gooidesses. Floorer has a half-moon in her hair, you see, which shows that the idolatrous Turks worship her, for the Turkish flag is a half moon, as I have seen at Constantinople! I have travelled, Beck."

"And vot room be it? Is it the master's?" persisted Beck.

"No, the pretty young lady, Miss Mainwaring, has it at present. There is nothing to see in it. But that one, opposite;" and the valet advanced to the door through which Madame Dalibard had disappeared—"that is curious; and as Madame is out, we may just take a peep." He opened the door gently, and Beck looked in. "This, which is called the turret-chamber, was Madame's when she was a girl, I have heard Old Bessy say; so master pops her there now. For my part, I'd rather sleep in your little crib, than have those great, gruff-looking figures staring at me by the firelight, and shaking their heads with every wind on a winter's night." And the valet took a pinch of snuff, as he drew Beck's attention to the faded tapestry on the walls. As they spoke, the draught between the door and the window caused the gloomy arras to wave with a life-like motion: and to those more superstitious than romantic, the chamber had certainly no inviting aspect.

"I never sees these old tapestry rooms," said the valet, "withe thinking of the story of the lady who coming from a ball and taking off her

jewels, happened to look up, and saw an eye in one of the figures which she felt sure was no peeper in worsted."

"Vot vos it, thin?" asked Beck, timidly lifting up the hangings, and noticing that there was a considerable space between them and the wall, which was filled up in part by closets and wardrobes set into the wall, with intervals more than deep enough for the hiding-place of a man.

"Why," answered the valet, "it was a thief. He had come for the jewels; but the lady had the presence of mind to say aloud, as if to herself, that she had forgotten something, slipped out of the room, locked the door, called up the servants, and the thief—who was no less a person than the under-butler—was nabbed."

"And the French 'oman sleeps 'ere?" said Beck, musingly.

"French 'oman! Master Beck, noth'ing's so vulgar as these nick-names, in a first-rate sitivation. It is all very well when one lives with skinflints; but with such a master as our'n, respect's the go. Besides, Madame is not a French 'oman; she is one of the family—and as old a family it is, too, as e'er a lord's in the three kingdoms. But come, your curiosity is satisfied now, and you must trot back to your horses."

As Beck returned to the stables, his mind yet more misgave him as to the criminal designs of his master's visitor. It was from Helen's room that the false cripple had walked, and the ill health of the poor young

lady was a general subject of compassionate comment. But Madame Dalibard was Helen's relation—from what motive could she harbour an evil thought against her own niece? But still, if those drops were poured into the healing draught for good—why so secretly? Once more he revolved the idea of speaking to St. John—an accident dissuaded him from this intention; the only proof to back his tale was the mysterious phial he had carried away; but unluckily, forgetting that it was in his pocket—at a time when he flung off his coat to groom one of the horses, the bottle struck against the corn-bin and broke—all the contents were spilt. This incident made him suspend his intention, and wait till he could obtain some fresh evidence of evil intentions. The day passed without any other noticeable occurrence. The doctor called, found Helen somewhat better, and ascribed it to his medicines, especially to the effect of his tonic draught the first thing in the morning. Helen smiled—"Nay, doctor," said she, "this morning, at least, it was forgotten. I did not find it by my bedside. Don't tell my aunt, she would be so angry." The doctor looked rather discomposed.

"Well," said he, soon recovering his good humour, "since you are certainly better to-day without the draught, discontinue it also to-morrow. I will make an alteration for the day after——" So that night Madame Dalibard visited in vain her niece's chamber—Helen had a reprieve.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SHADES ON THE DIAL.

THE following morning was indeed eventful to the family at Laughton; and, as if conscious of what it brought forth, it rose dreary and sunless; one heavy mist covered all the landscape, and a raw drizzling rain fell pattering through the yellow leaves.

Madame Dalibard, pleading her infirmities, rarely left her room before noon, and Varney professed himself very irregular in his hours of rising; the breakfast, therefore, afforded no social assembly to the family, but each took that meal in the solitude of his or her own chamber. Percival, in whom all habits partook of the healthfulness and simplicity of his character, rose habitually early; and that day, in spite of the weather, walked forth betimes to meet the person charged with the letters from the post. He had done so for the last three or four days, impatient to hear from his mother, and calculating that it was full time to receive the expected answer to his confession and his prayer. He met the messenger at the bottom of the park, not far from Guy's Oak. This day he was not disappointed. The letter-bag contained three letters for himself, two with the foreign post-mark—the third in Ardworth's hand. It contained also a letter for Madame Dalibard, and two for Varney.

Leaving the messenger to take these last to the hall, Percival, with his own prizes, plunged into the hollow of the glen before him, and, seating himself at the foot of Guy's Oak, through the vast branches of which the rain scarcely came, and

only in single, mournful drops, he opened first the letter in his mother's hand, and read as follows:—

"My dear, dear Son,—How can I express to you the alarm your letter has given to me! So these, then, are the new relations you have discovered! I fondly imagined that you were alluding to some of my own family, and conjecturing who amongst my many cousins could have so captivated your attention. These the new relations! Lucretia Dalibard—Helen Mainwaring! Percival do you not know—No, you cannot know—that Helen Mainwaring is the daughter of a disgraced man—of one who (more than suspected of fraud in the bank in which he was a partner) left his country, condemned even by his own father. If you doubt this, you have but to inquire at * * * *, not ten miles from Laughton, where the elder Mainwaring resided. Ask there, what became of William Mainwaring; And Lucretia,—you do not know that the dying prayer of her uncle, Sir Miles St. John, was that she might never enter the house he bequeathed to your father. Not till after my poor Charles's death did I know the exact cause for Sir Miles's displeasure, though confident it was just; but then amongst his papers I found the ungrateful letter which betrayed thoughts so dark, and passions so unwomanly, that I blushed for my sex to read it. Could it be possible that that poor old man's prayers were unheeded—that that treacherous step could ever cross your threshold—that that cruel eye which read with

such barbarous joy the ravages of death on a benefactor's face, could rest on the hearth, by which your frank truthful countenance has so often smiled away my tears, I should feel indeed, as if a thunder-cloud hung over the roof.—No! if you marry the niece, the aunt must be banished from your house.—Good Heavens! and it is the daughter of William Mainwaring, the niece and ward of Lucretia Dalibard, to whom you have given your faithful affection—whom you single from the world as your wife! Oh! my son—my beloved—my sole surviving child—do not think that I blame you, that my heart does not bleed while I write thus; but I implore you on my knees to pause at least,—to suspend this intercourse, till I myself can reach England. And what then? Why, then, Percival, I promise, on my part, that I will see your Helen with unprejudiced eyes—that I will put away from me, as far as possible, all visions of disappointed pride—the remembrance of faults not her own; and if she be, as you say and think, I will take her to my heart and call her ‘Daughter.’ Are you satisfied? If so, come to me—come at once, and take comfort from your mother’s lips. How I long to be with you while you read this—how I tremble at the pain I so rudely give you! But my poor sister still chains me here, I dare not leave her, lest I should lose her last sigh. Come then, come, we will console each other.

“Your fond (how fond!) and sorrowing mother,

“MARY ST. JOHN.

“October 3rd, 1831.

“Sorrento.

“P.S. You see by this address that we have left Pisa for this place, recommended by our physician; hence an unhappy delay of some days in my reply. Ah, Percival, how sleepless will be my pillow till I hear from you!”

Long, very long, was it before St John, mute and overwhelmed with the sudden shock of his anguish, opened his other letters—the first was from Captain Greville:

“What trap have you fallen into, foolish boy! That you would get into some silly scrape or another was natural enough. But a scrape for life, Sir—that is serious! But, God bless you for your candour, my Percival—you have written to us in time—you are old-fashioned enough to think that a mother’s consent is necessary to a young man’s union. And you have left it in our power to save you yet; it is not every boyish fancy that proves to be true love. But enough of this preaching; I shall do better than write scolding letters, I shall come and scold you in person. My servant is at this very moment packing my portmanteau, the *laquais-de-place* is gone to Naples for my passport. Almost as soon as you receive this I shall be with you; and if I am a day or two later than the mail, be patient; do not commit yourself further. Break your heart if you please, but don’t implicate your honour. I shall come at once to Curzon-street. Adieu!

“H. GREVILLE.”

Ardworth’s letter was shorter than the others; fortunately so, for otherwise it had been unread:

“If I do not come to you myself the day after you receive this, dear Percival, which, indeed, is most probable, I shall send you my proxy in one whom, for my sake, I know that you will kindly welcome. He will undertake my task, and clear up all the mysteries with which, I trust, my correspondence has thoroughly bewildered your lively imagination.

“Yours, ever,

“JOHN ARDORTH.

“Gray’s Inn.”

Little, indeed, did Percival's imagination busy itself with the mysteries of Ardworth's correspondence. His mind scarcely took in the sense of the words, over which his eye mechanically wandered.

And the letter which narrated the visit of Madame Dalibard to the house thus solemnly interdicted to her step, was on its way to his mother; nay, by this time would almost have reached her. Greville was on the road; nay, as his tutor's letter had been forwarded from London—might, perhaps, be in Curzon-street that day. How desirable to see him before he could reach Laughton, to prepare him for Madame Dalibard's visit; for Helen's illness; explain the position in which he was involved, and conciliate the old soldier's rough, kind heart to his love and his distress!

He did not dread the meeting with Greville; he yearned for it. He needed an adviser, a confidant, a friend. To dismiss abruptly his guests from his house—impossible! to abandon Helen because of her father's crime, or her aunt's fault, (whatever that last might be—and no clear detail of it was given) *that* never entered his thoughts! Pure and unsullied, the starry face of Helen shone the holier for the cloud around it. An inexpressible and chivalrous compassion mingled with his love and confirmed his faith. She, poor child, to suffer for the deeds of others! No. What availed his power as man, and dignity as gentleman, if they could not wrap in their own shelter the one by whom such shelter was now doubly needed! Thus, amidst all his emotions—firm and resolved, at least on one point—and beginning already to recover the hope of his sanguine nature, from his reliance on his mother's love, on the promises that softened her disclosures and warnings, and on his conviction that

Helen had only to be seen for every scruple to give way, Percival wandered back towards the house, and, coming abruptly on the terrace, he encountered Varney, who was leaning motionless against the balustrades, with an open letter in his hand. Varney was deadly pale, and there was the trace of some recent and gloomy agitation in the relaxed muscles of his cheeks, usually so firmly rounded. But Percival did not heed his appearance as he took him gravely by the arm, and leading him into the garden, said, after a painful pause—

"Varney, I am about to ask you two questions, which your close connexion with Madame Dalibard may enable you to answer; but in which, from obvious motives, I must demand the strictest confidence. You will not hint to her or to Helen what I am about to say?"

Varney stared uneasily on Percival's serious countenance, and gave the promise required.

"First, then, for what offence was Madame Dalibard expelled her uncle's house—this house of Laughton?"

"Secondly, what is the crime with which Mr. Mainwaring, Helen's father, is charged?"

"With regard to the first," said Varney, recovering his composure, "I thought I had already told you that Sir Miles was a proud man, and that, in consequence of discovering a girlish flirtation between his niece Lucretia (now Madame Dalibard) and Mainwaring, who afterwards jilted her for Helen's mother, he altered his will—'expelled her his house,' is too harsh a phrase. This is all I know. With regard to the second question, no crime was ever brought home to William Mainwaring. He was suspected of dealing improperly with the funds of the bank, and he repaid the alleged deficit by the sacrifice of all he possessed."

"This is the truth!" exclaimed Percival, joyfully.

"The plain truth, I believe; but why these questions at this moment? Ah, you too, I see, have had letters—I understand! Lady Mary gives these reasons for withholding her consent."

"Her consent is not withheld," answered Percival; "but, shall I own it?—remember, I have your promise not to wound and offend Madame Dalibard by the disclosure: my mother does refer to the subjects I have alluded to, and Captain Greville, my old friend and tutor, is on his way to England—perhaps to-morrow he may arrive at Laughton."

"Ha!" said Varney, startled—"to-morrow!—and what sort of a man is this Captain Greville?"

"The best man possible for such a case as mine—kind-hearted, yet cool, sagacious, the finest observer, the quickest judge of character—nothing escapes him. Oh, one interview will suffice to show him all Helen's innocent and matchless excellence!"

"To-morrow! this man comes to-morrow!"

"All that I fear is—for he is rather rough and blunt in his manner,—all that I fear is, his first surprise—and, dare I say, displeasure, at seeing this poor Madame Dalibard, whose faults, I fear, were graver than you suppose, at the house from which her uncle—to whom, indeed, I owe this inheritance——"

"I see—I see!" interrupted Varney, quickly. "And Madame Dalibard is the most susceptible of women—so well-born, and so poor, so gifted, and so helpless—it is natural. Can you not write, and put off this Captain Greville for a few days?—until, indeed, I can find some excuse for terminating our visit."

"But my letter may be hardly in time to reach him; he may be in town to-day."

"Go then to town at once; you

can be back late at night, or at least to-morrow. Anything better than wounding the pride of a woman, on whom, after all, you must depend for free and open intercourse with Helen."

"That is exactly what I thought of; but what excuse?—"

"Excuse!—a thousand! Every man coming of age into such a property, has business with his lawyers; or why not say simply that you want to meet a friend of yours, who has just left your mother in Italy!—in short, any excuse suffices, and none can be offensive."

"I will order my carriage instantly."

"Right!" exclaimed Varney; and his eye followed the receding form of Percival with a mixture of fierce exultation and anxious fear. Then turning towards the window of the turret-chamber, in which Madame Dalibard reposed, and seeing it still closed, he muttered an impatient oath; but even while he did so, the shutters were slowly opened, and a footman, stepping from the porch, approached Varney with a message, that Madame Dalibard would see him in five minutes, if he would then have the goodness to ascend to her room.

Before that time was well expired, Varney was in the chamber. Madame Dalibard was up, and in her chair: and the unwonted joy which her countenance evinced, was in strong contrast with the sombre shade upon her son-in-law's brow, and the nervous quiver of his lip."

"Gabriel," she said, as he drew near to her, "my son is found!"

"I know it," he answered petulantly.

"You!—from whom?"

"From Grabman."

"And I from a still better authority—from Walter Ardworth himself! He lives; he will restore my child!"

She extended a letter while she spoke. He, in return, gave her, not that still crumpled in his hand, but one which he drew from his breast. These letters severally occupied both, begun and finished almost in the same moment.

That from Grabman run thus:—

“Dear Jason—Toss up your hat, and cry hip-hip! At last, from person to person, I have tracked the lost Vincent Braddell. He lives still! We can maintain his identity in any court of law. Scarce in time for the post, I have not a moment for further particulars. I shall employ the next two days in reducing all the evidence to a regular digest, which I will despatch to you. Meanwhile, prepare, as soon as may be, to put me in possession of my fee,—5000*l.*, and my expedition merits something more. Yours,

“NICHOLAS GRABMAN.”

The letter from Ardworth was no less positive:

“Madam,—In obedience to the commands of a dying friend, I took charge of his infant, and concealed its existence from his mother—yourself. On returning to England, I need not say that I was not unmindful of my trust. Your son lives; and, after mature reflection, I have resolved to restore him to your arms. In this I have been decided by what I have heard from one whom I can trust, of your altered habits, your decorous life, your melancholy infirmities, and the generous protection you have given to the orphan of my poor cousin Susan, my old friend Mainwaring. Alfred Braddell himself, if it be permitted to him to look down and read my motives, will pardon me, I venture to feel assured, this departure from his injunctions. Whatever the faults which displeased

him, they have been amply chastised. And your son, grown to man, can no longer be endangered by example, in tending the couch, or soothing the repentance, of his mother.

“These words are severe; but you will pardon them in him who gives you back your child. I shall venture to wait on you in person, with such proofs as may satisfy you as to the identity of your son. I count on arriving at Laughton to-morrow. Meanwhile, I simply sign myself by a name, in which you will recognise the kinsman to one branch of your family, and the friend of your dead husband, J. WALTER ARDWORTH.

“Craven Hotel, October, 1831.”

“Well! and you are not rejoiced!” said Lucretia, gazing surprised on Varney’s sullen and unsympathising face.

“No! because time presses; because, even while discovering your son, you may fail in securing his heritage; because, in the midst of your triumph, I see Newgate opening to myself! Look you, I, too, have had my news—less pleasing than yours. This Stubmore (curse him!) writes me word, that he shall certainly be in town next month at farthest, and that he meditates, immediately on his arrival, transferring the legacy from the Bank of England to an excellent mortgage of which he has heard. Were it not for this scheme of ours, nothing would be left for me but flight and exile.”

“A month!—that is a long time. Do you think, now that my son is found, and that son one like John Ardworth, (for there can be no doubt that my surmise was right,) with genius to make station the pedestal to the power I dreamed of in my youth, but which my sex forbade me to attain—do you think I will keep him a month from his inheritance? Before the month is out, you

shall replace what you have taken, and buy your trustee's silence, if need be—either from the sums you have insured, or from the rents of Laughton."

"Lucretia!" said Varney, whose fresh colours had grown livid—"what is to be done must be done at once! Percival St. John has heard from his mother. Attend!" And Varney rapidly related the questions St. John had put to him, the dreaded arrival of Captain Greville, the danger of so keen an observer—the necessity, at all events, of abridging their visit—the urgency of hastening the catastrophe to its close.

Lucretia listened in ominous and steadfast silence.

"But," she said, at last, "you have persuaded St. John to give this man the meeting in London—to put off his visit for the time! St. John will return to us to-morrow. Well; and if he finds his Helen is no more! Two nights ago I, for the first time, mingled in the morning draught that which has no antidote and no cure. This night two drops more, and St. John will return to find that Death is in the house before him. And then for himself—the sole remaining barrier between my son and this inheritance, for himself—why grief sometimes kills suddenly; and there be drugs whose effect simulates the death-stroke of grief."

"Yet, yet, this rapidity, if necessary, is perilous. Nothing in Helen's state forebodes *sudden* death by natural means. The strangeness of two deaths—both so young—Greville in England, if not here—hastening down to examine, to inquire, with such prepossessions against you:—there must be an inquest!"

"Well, and what can be discovered? It was I who shrunk before—it is I who now urge dispatch. I feel as in my proper home in these halls. I would not leave them again but

to my grave! I stand on the hearth of my youth. I fight for my rights and my son's. Perish those who oppose me!"

A fell energy and power were in the aspect of the murderess as she thus spoke; and while her determination awed the inferior villany of Varney, it served somewhat to mitigate his fears.

As in more detail they began to arrange their execrable plans, Percival, while the horses were being harnessed to take him to the nearest post-town, sought Helen, and found her in the little chamber which he had described and appropriated as her own, when his fond fancy had sketched the fair outline of the future.

This room had been originally fitted up for the private devotions of the Roman-catholic wife of an ancestor, in the reign of Charles II.; and in a recess, half veiled by a curtain, there still stood that holy symbol, which, whether protestant or Roman catholic, no one sincerely penetrated with the solemn pathos of sacred history can behold unmoved—the Cross of the Divine Agony. Before this holy symbol, Helen stood in earnest reverence. She did not kneel (for the forms of the religion in which she had been reared were opposed to that posture of worship before the graven image), but you could see in that countenance, eloquent at once with the enthusiasm and the meekness of piety, that the soul was filled with the memories and the hopes, which, age after age, have consoled the sufferer, and inspired the martyr. The soul knelt to the idea, if the knee bowed not to the image, embracing the tender grandeur of the sacrifice, and the vast inheritance opened to faith in the redemption.

The young man held his breath while he gazed. He was moved, and he was awed. Slowly Helen turned

towards him, and, smiling sweetly, held out to him her hand. They seated themselves in silence in the depth of the overhanging casement; and the mournful character of the scene without, where, dimly through the misty rains, gloomed the dark foliage of the cedars, made them insensibly draw closer to each other, in the instinct of love when the world frowns around it. Percival wanted the courage to say that he had come to take farewell, though but for a day, and Helen spoke first.

"I cannot guess why it is, Percival, but I am startled at the change I feel in myself—no, not in health, dear Percival, I mean in mind,—during the last few months;—since, indeed, we have known each other. I remember so well the morning in which my aunt's letter arrived at the dear vicarage. We were returning from the village fair, and my good guardian was smiling at my notions of the world. I was then so giddy, and light, and thoughtless—everything presented itself to me in such gay colours,—I scarcely believed in sorrow. And now I feel as if I were awakened to a truer sense of nature—of the ends of our being here; I seem to know that life is a grave and solemn thing. Yet I am not less happy, Percival. No, I think, rather, that I knew not true happiness till I knew you. I have read somewhere that the slave is gay in his holiday from toil; if you free him, if you educate him, the gaiety vanishes, and he cares no more for the dance under the palm-tree. But is he less happy? So it is with me!"

"My sweet Helen, I would rather have one gay smile of old—the arch, careless laugh which came so naturally from those rosy lips, than hear you talk of happiness with that quiver in your voice—those tears in your eyes."

"Yet gaiety," said Helen, thought-

fully, and in the strain of her pure, truthful poetry of soul, "is only the light impression of the present moment—the play of the mere spirits; and happiness seems a forethought of the future, spreading on, far and broad, over all time and space."

"And you live, then, in the future, at last—you have no misgivings now, my Helen? Well, that comforts me! Say it, Helen,—say the future will be ours!"

"It will—it will—for ever and for ever," said Helen, earnestly, and her eyes involuntarily rested on the Cross.

In his younger spirit and less imaginative nature, Percival did not comprehend the depth of sadness implied in Helen's answer; taking it literally, he felt as if a load were lifted from his heart, and kissing with rapture the hand he held, he exclaimed—"Yes, this shall soon—oh, soon be mine! I fear nothing while you hope. You cannot guess how those words have cheered me, for I am leaving you, though but for a few hours, and I shall repeat those words—they will ring in my ear, in my heart, till we meet again."

"Leaving me!" said Helen, turning pale, and her clasp on his hand tightened. Poor child, she felt mysteriously, a sentiment of protection in his presence.

"But at most for a day. My old tutor, of whom we have so often conversed, is on his way to England—perhaps, even now in London. He has some wrong impressions against your aunt—his manner is blunt and rough. It is necessary that I should see him before he comes hither—you know how susceptible is your aunt's pride—just to prepare him for meeting her,—you understand!"

"What impressions against my aunt? Does he even know her?" asked Helen; and if such a sentiment as suspicion could cross that candid

innocence of mind—that sentiment towards this stern relation whose arms had never embraced her—whose lips had never spoken of the past—whose history was as a sealed volume, disturbed and disquieted her.

“It is because he has never known her that he does her wrong. Some old story of her indiscretion as a girl—of her uncle’s displeasure—what matters now?” said Percival, shrinking sensitively from one disclosure that might wound Helen in her kinswoman. “Meanwhile, dearest, you will be prudent—you will avoid this damp air, and keep quietly at home, and amuse yourself, sweet fancier of the future, in planning how to improve these old halls, when they and their unworthy master are your own. God bless you!—God guard you, Helen!”

He rose, and with that loyal chivalry of love which felt respect the more for the careless guardianship to which his Helen was entrusted, he refrained from that parting kiss which their pure courtship warranted, —for which his lip yearned. But as

he lingered, an irresistible impulse moved Helen’s heart. Mechanically she opened her arms, and her head sunk upon his shoulder. In that embrace, they remained some moments silent, and an angel might unrepiningly have heard their hearts beat through the stillness.

At length, Percival tore himself from those arms which relaxed their imploring hold reluctantly:—she heard his hurried step descend the stairs, and, in a moment more, the roll of the wheels in the court without:—a dreary sense as of some utter desertion, some everlasting bereavement, chilled and appalled her. She stood motionless, as if turned to stone, on the floor; suddenly the touch of something warm on her hand—a plaining whine, awoke her attention;—Percival’s favourite dog missed his master, and had slunk for refuge to her. The dread sentiment of loneliness vanished in that humble companionship; and, seating herself on the ground, she took the dog in her arms, and bending over it, wept in silence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MURDER, TOWARDS HIS DESIGN, MOVES LIKE A GHOST.

THE reader will, doubtless, have observed the consummate art with which the poisoner had hitherto advanced upon her prey. The design conceived from afar, and executed with elaborate stealth, defied every chance of detection, against which the ingenuity of practised villany could guard. Grant even that the deadly drugs should betray the nature of the death they inflicted, that by some un conjectured secret in the science of chemistry, the presence of those vegetable compounds which had hitherto baffled every known and positive test, in the posthumous examination of the most experienced surgeons, should be clearly ascertained, not one suspicion seemed likely to fall upon the ministrant of death. The medicines were never brought to Madame Dalibard, were never given by her hand; nothing ever tasted by the victim could be tracked to her aunt. The helpless condition of the cripple, which Lucretia had assumed, forbade all notion even of her power of movement. Only in the dead of night, when, as she believed, every human eye that could watch her was sealed in sleep, and then in those dark habiliments, which, (even, as might sometimes happen, if the victim herself were awake,) a chance ray of light struggling through chink or shutter could scarcely distinguish from the general gloom,—did she steal to the chamber, and infuse the colourless and tasteless liquid* in the morning draught,

meant to bring strength and healing. Grant that the draught was untouched—that it was examined by the surgeon—that the fell admixture could be detected—suspicion would wander anywhere rather than to that crippled and helpless kinswoman, who could not rise from her bed without aid.

But now this patience was to be abandoned, the folds of the serpent were to coil in one fell clasp upon its prey.

Fiend as Lucretia had become, and hardened as were all her resolves by the discovery of her son, and her impatience to endow him with her forfeited inheritance, she yet shrank from the face of Helen that day; on the excuse of illness, she kept her room, and admitted only Varney, who stole in from time to time, with creeping step and haggard countenance, to sustain her courage or his own. And every time he entered, he found Lucretia sitting with Walter Ardworth's open letter in her hand, and turning with a preternatural excitement, that seemed almost like aberration of mind, from the grim and horrid topic which he invited, to thoughts of wealth, and power, and triumph, and exulting prophecies of the fame her son should achieve: He looked but on the blackness of the gulf, and shuddered; her vision overleapt it, and smiled on the misty palaces her fancy built beyond.

Late in the evening, before she

(Tufania water) was wholly without taste or colour.

* The celebrated *aqua di Tufania* No. 328.

retired to rest, Helen knocked gently at her aunt's door,—a voice quick and startled, bade her enter; she came in, with her sweet caressing look, and took Lucretia's hand, which struggled from the clasp. Bending over that haggard brow, she said, simply, yet to Lucretia's ear the voice seemed that of command: "Let me kiss you, this night!" and her lips pressed that brow. The murderess shuddered, and closed her eyes; when she opened them, the angel visitor was gone.

Night deepened and deepened into those hours from the first of which we number the morn, though night still is at her full. Moon-beam and star-beam came through the casements, shyly, and fairy-like, as on that night, when the murderess was young and crimeless—in deed, if not in thought—that night, when in the book of Leechcraft, she meted out the hours, in which the life of her benefactor might still interpose between her passion and its end. Along the stairs, through the hall, marched the armies of light—noiseless, and still and clear, as the judgments of God, amidst the darkness and shadow of mortal destinies. In one chamber alone, the folds, curtained close, forbade all but single ray—that ray came direct, as the stream from a lantern, as the beam reflected back from an eye:—as an

eye it seemed watchful, and steadfast, through the dark; it shot along the floor—it fell at the foot of the bed.

Suddenly, in the exceeding hush, there was a strange and ghastly sound—it was the howl of a dog! Helen started from her sleep. Percival's dog had followed her, into her room, it had coiled itself, grateful for the kindness, at the foot of the bed. Now, it was on the pillow, she felt its heart beat against her hand; it was trembling; its hairs bristled up, and the howl changed into a shrill bark of terror and wrath. Alarmed, she looked round: quickly between her and that ray from the crevice, a shapeless Darkness passed, and was gone! So undistinguishable, so without outline, that it had no likeness of any living form:—like a cloud, like a thought, like an omen, it came in gloom, and it vanished.

Helen was seized with a superstitious terror—the dog continued to tremble and growl low. All once more was still—the dog sighed itself to rest. The stillness, the solitude—the glimmer of the moon—all contributed yet more to appal the enfeebled nerves of the listening shrinking girl. At length she buried her face under the clothes, and towards daybreak fell into a broken feverish sleep, haunted with threatening dreams.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MESSENGER SPEEDS.

TOWARDS the afternoon of the following day, an elderly gentleman was seated in the coffee room of an hotel at Southampton, engaged in writing a letter, while the waiter in attendance was employed on the wires that fettered the petulant spirit contained in a bottle of Schweppe's soda water. There was something in the aspect of the old gentleman, and in the very tone of his voice, that inspired respect, and the waiter had cleared the other tables of their latest newspapers to place before him. He had only just arrived by the packet from Havre, and even the newspapers had not been to him that primary attraction they generally constitute to the Englishman returning to his bustling native land, which, somewhat to his surprise, has contrived to go on tolerably well during his absence.

We use our privilege of looking over his shoulder while he writes:—

"Here I am, then, dear Lady Mary, at Southampton, and within an easy drive of the old Hall! A file of Galignani's Journals, which I found on the road between Marseilles and Paris, informed me, under the head of 'fashionable movements,' that 'Perceval St. John, Esq., was gone to his seat at Laughton.' According to my customary tactics of marching at once to the seat of action, I therefore made direct for Havre, instead of crossing from Calais, and I suppose I shall find our young gentleman engaged in the slaughter of hares and partridges. You see, it is a good sign that he can leave London. Keep up your spirits, my dear friend. If

Perce has been really duped and taken in,—as all you mothers are so apt to fancy,—rely upon an old soldier to defeat the enemy, and expose the *ruse*. But if, after all, the girl is such as he describes and believes—innocent, artless, and worthy his affection—oh, then I range myself, with your own good heart, upon his side. Never will I run the risk of unsettling a man's whole character for life by wantonly interfering with his affections. But there we are agreed.

"In a few hours I shall be with our dear boy, and his whole heart will come out clear and candid as when it beat under his midshipman's true blue. In a day or two, I shall make him take me to town, to introduce me to the whole nest of them. Then I shall report progress. Adieu, till then! Kind regards to your poor sister. I think we shall have a mild winter. Not one warning twinge, as yet, of the old rheumatism.

"Ever your devoted old friend

"and *preux chevalier*,

"H. GREVILLE."

The captain had completed his letter, sipped his soda water, and was affixing to his communication his seal, when he heard the rattle of a post-chaise without. Fancying it was the one he had ordered, he went to the open window which looked on the street; but the chaise contained travellers, only halting to change horses. Somewhat to his surprise, and a little to his chagrin,—for the captain did not count on finding

company at the Hall,—he heard one of the travellers in the chaise ask the distance to Laughton. The countenance of the questioner was not familiar to him. But, leaving the worthy captain to question the landlord, without any satisfactory information, and to hasten the chaise for himself, we accompany the travellers on their way to Laughton. They were but two—the proper complement of a post-chaise—and they were both of the ruder sex. The elder of the two was a man of middle age, but whom the wear and tear of active life had evidently advanced towards the state called *elderly*. But there was still abundant life in his quick, dark eye; and that mercurial youthfulness of character, which in some happy constitutions, seems to defy years and sorrows, evinced itself in a rapid play of countenance, and as much gesticulation as the narrow confines of the vehicle, and the position of a traveller, will permit. The younger man, far more grave in aspect and quiet in manner, leaned back in the corner with folded arms, and listened with respectful attention to his companion.

“Certainly, Dr. Johnson is right—great happiness in an English post-chaise properly driven!—more exhilarating than a palanquin: ‘*Post equitem sedet atra cura*’—true only of such scrubby hacks as old Horace could have known. Black Care does not sit behind English posters—eh, my boy!” As he spoke this, the gentleman had twice let down the glass of the vehicle, and twice put it up again.

“Yet,” he resumed, without noticing the brief, good-humoured reply of his companion—“yet this is an anxious business enough that we are about. I don’t feel quite easy in my conscience. Poor Braddell’s injunctions were very strict, and I disobey them. It is on your responsibility, John!”

“I take it without hesitation. All

the motives for so stern a severance must have ceased, and is it not a sufficient punishment to find in that hoped-for son, a ——”

“Poor woman!” interrupted the elder gentleman, in whom we begin to recognise the *soi-disant* Mr. Tomkins—“true, indeed—too true. How well I remember the impression Lucretia Clavering first produced on me;—and to think of her now as a miserable cripple! By Jove, you are right, sir! Drive on postboy, quick quick!”

There was a short silence.

The elder gentleman, abruptly, put his hand upon his companion’s arm.

“What consummate acuteness—what patient research you have shown! What could I have done in this business without you? How often had that garrulous Mrs. Mivers bored me with Becky Carruthers, and the coral, and St. Paul’s, and not a suspicion came across me;—a word was sufficient for you;—and then to track this unfeeling old Joplin, from place to place, till you find her absolutely a servant under the very roof of Mrs. Braddell herself! Wonderful! Ah, boy, you will be an honour to the law, and to your country. And, what a hard-hearted rascal you must think me, to have deserted you so long!”

“My dear father,” said John Ardworth, tenderly—“your love now recompenses me for all. And ought I not rather to rejoice not to have known the tale of a mother’s shame, until I could half forget it on a father’s breast?”

“John,” said the elder Ardworth, with a choking voice—“I ought to wear sackcloth all my life, for having given you such a mother. When I think what I have suffered from the habit of carelessness in those confounded money matters (—‘*irrita-menta malorum*,’ indeed!) I have only one consolation, that my patient, noble son, is free from my vice. You

would not believe what a well-principled, honourable fellow I was at your age, and yet, how truly I said to my poor friend, William Mainwaring, one day at Laughton (I remember it now)—“Trust me with anything else but half-a-guinea!” Why, sir, it was that fault that threw me into low company—that brought me in contact with my innkeeper’s daughter at Limerick. I fell in love, and I married (for, with all my faults, I was never a seducer, John). I did not own my marriage; why should I? my relatives had cut me already. You were born, and hunted poor devil as I was, I forgot all by your cradle. Then, in the midst of my troubles, that ungrateful woman deserted me—then, I was led to believe that it was not my own son whom I had kissed and blessed. Ah, but for that thought should I have left you as I did! And even in infancy, you had the features only of your mother. Then, when the death of the adulteress set me free, and years afterwards, in India, I married again, and had new ties—my heart grew still harder to you. I excused myself by knowing that at least you were cared for, and trained to good by a better guide than I. But when, by so strange a hazard, the very priest who had confessed

your mother on her death-bed (she was a Catholic), came to India, and (for he had known me at Limerick) recognised my altered person, and obeying his penitent’s last injunctions, assured me that you were my son,—oh, John, then, believe me, I hastened back to England, on the wings of remorse! Love you, boy! I have left at Madras, three children, young and fair, by a woman now in heaven, who never wronged me, and, by my soul, John Ardworth, you are dearer to me than all!”

The father’s head drooped on his son’s breast as he spoke; then, dashing away his tears, he resumed:

“Ah, why would not Braddell permit me, as I proposed, to find for his son the same guardianship as that to which I entrusted my own: but his bigotry besotted him;—a clergyman of the high church,—that was worse than an atheist! I had no choice left to me but the roof of that she-hypocrite. Yet I ought to have come to England when I heard of the child’s loss, braved duns and all: but I was money-making, money-making—retribution for money-wasting;—and—well, it’s no use repenting!—and—and—there is the lodge, the park, the old trees! Poor Sir Miles!”

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SPY FLIES.

MEANWHILE at Laughton, there was confusion and alarm. Helen had found herself more than usually unwell in the morning; towards noon, the maid, who attended her, informed Madame Dalibard that she was afraid the poor young lady had much fever, and inquired if the doctor should be sent for. Madame Dalibard seemed surprised at the intelligence, and directed her chair to be wheeled into her niece's room, in order herself to judge of Helen's state. The maid, sure that the doctor would be summoned, hastened to the stables, and seeing Beck, instructed him to saddle one of the horses, and to await further orders. Beck kept her a few moments talking, while he saddled his horse, and then followed her into the house, observing that it would save time if he were close at hand.

"That is quite true," said the maid, "and you may as well wait in the corridor. Madame may wish to speak to you herself, and give you her own message or note to the Doctor."

Beck, full of gloomy suspicions, gladly obeyed; and while the maid entered the sick chamber, stood anxiously without. Presently Varney passed him, and knocked at Helen's door; the maid half opened it.

"How is Miss Mainwaring?" said he eagerly.

"I fear she is worse, sir,—but Madame Dalibard does not think there is any danger."

"No danger! I am glad; but pray ask Madame Dalibard to let me see her for a few moments, in her own room. If she come out I will wheel

her chair to it. Whether there is danger or not we had better send for other advice than this country doctor, who has perhaps mistaken the case; tell her I am very uneasy, and beg her to join me immediately."

"I think you are quite right, sir;" said the maid, closing the door.

Varney then turning round for the first time, noticed Beck, and said, roughly—

"What do you do here? Wait below till you are sent for."

Beck pulled his forelock, and retreated back, not in the direction of the principal staircase, but towards that used by the servants, and which his researches into the topography of the mansion had now made known to him. To gain these back stairs he had to pass Lucretia's room; the door stood ajar; Varney's face was turned from him. Beck breathed hard, looked round, then crept within, and, in a moment, was behind the folds of the tapestry.

Soon the chair in which sat Madame Dalibard was drawn by Varney himself into the room.

Shutting the door with care, and turning the key, Gabriel said, with low, suppressed passion—

"Well; your mind seems wandering—speak!"

"It is strange," said Lucretia, in hollow tones, "can Nature turn accomplice, and befriend us here?"

"Nature! did you not last night administer the ——"

"No," interrupted Lucretia. "No; she came into the room—she kissed me here, on the brow that even then

was meditating murder. The kiss burned; it burns still—it eat into the brain, like remorse. But I did not yield—I read again her false father's protestation of love—I read again the letter announcing the discovery of my son, and remorse lay still—I went forth as before—I stole into her chamber—I had the fatal crystal in my hand—

"Well! well!"

"And suddenly there came the fearful howl of a dog! and the dog's fierce eyes glared on me—I paused—I trembled—Helen started, woke, called aloud—I turned and fled. The poison was not given."

Varney ground his teeth. "But this illness! Ha! the effect, perhaps, of the drops administered two nights ago."

"No! this illness has no symptoms like those the poison should bequeathe; it is but natural fever, a shock on the nerves; she told me she had been awakened by the dog's howl, and seen a dark form, like a thing from the grave, creeping along the floor. But she is really ill—send for the physician; there is nothing in her illness to betray the hand of man. Be it as it may—that kiss still burns—I will stir in this no more. Do what you will yourself!"

"Fool, fool!" exclaimed Varney, almost rudely grasping her arm. "Remember how much we have yet to prepare for—how much to do—and the time so short! Percival's return—perhaps this Greville's arrival. Give me the drugs, I will mix them for her in the potion the physician sends. And when Percival returns—his Helen dead or dying—why I will attend on him! Silent still? Recall your son! Soon you will clasp him in your arms as a beggar or as the lord of Laughton!"

Lucretia shuddered, but did not rise; she drew forth a ring of keys from her bosom, and pointed towards

a secretary. Varney snatched the keys, unlocked the secretary, seized the fatal casket, and sat down quietly before it.

When the dire selections were made, and secreted about his person, Varney rose, approached the fire, and blew the wood embers to a blaze.

"And now," he said, with his icy irony of smile, "we may dismiss these useful instruments, perhaps for ever. Though Walter Ardworth, in restoring your son, leaves us dependent on that son's filial affection, and I may have, therefore, little to hope for from the succession, to secure which I have risked, and am again to risk my life, I yet trust to that influence which you never fail to obtain over others. I take it for granted, that, when these halls are Vincent Braddell's, we shall have no need of gold, nor of these pale alchemies. Perish, then, the mute witnesses of our acts!—the elements we have bowed to our will! No poisons shall be found in our hoards! Fire, consume your consuming children!"

As he spoke, he threw upon the hearth the contents of the casket, and set his heel upon the logs. A bluish flame shot up, breaking into countless sparks, and then died.

Lucretia watched him, without speaking.

In coming back towards the table, Varney felt something hard beneath his tread; he stooped, and picked up the ring which has before been described as amongst the ghastly treasures of the casket, and which had rolled on the floor, almost to Lucretia's feet, as he had emptied the contents on the hearth.

"This, at least, need tell no tales, said he—"a pity to destroy so rare a piece of workmanship—one, too, which we never can replace!"

"Ay," said Lucretia, abstractedly,—"and, if detection comes, it may

secure a refuge from the gibbet—give me the ring!”

“A refuge more terrible than the detection,” said Varney—“beware of such a thought;” as Lucretia, taking it from his hand, placed the ring on her finger.

“And now, I leave you for awhile to re-collect yourself—to compose your countenance, and your thoughts. I will send for the physician.”

Lucretia, with her eyes fixed on the floor, did not heed him, and he withdrew.

So motionless was her attitude—so still her very breathing—that the unseen witness behind the tapestry, who, while struck with horror at what he had overheard (the general purport of which it was impossible that he could misunderstand), was parched with impatience to escape—to rescue his beloved master from his impending fate, and warn him of the fate hovering nearer still over Helen,—ventured to creep along the wall to the threshold—to peer forth from the arras, and seeing her eyes still downcast, to emerge, and place his hand on the door.

At that very moment Lucretia looked up, and saw him gliding from the tapestry—their eyes met—his were fascinated as the bird’s by the snake’s. At the sight, all her craft—her intellect returned. With a glance, she comprehended the terrible danger that awaited her. Before he was aware of her movement, she was at his side—her hand on his own—her voice in his ear.

“Stir not a step—utter not a sound—or you are——”

Beck did not suffer her to proceed. With the violence rather of fear than of courage, he struck her to the ground; but she clung to him still; and, though rendered for the moment speechless by the suddenness of the blow, her eyes took an expression of unspeakable cruelty and fierceness. He struggled with all his might to

shake her off; as he did so, she placed feebly her other hand upon the wrist of the lifted arm that had smitten her, and he felt a sharp pain, as if the nails had fastened into the flesh. This but exasperated him into new efforts. He extricated himself from her grasp, which relaxed, as her lips writhed into a smile of scorn and triumph, and, spurning her while she lay before the threshold, he opened the door, sprang forward, and escaped. No thought had he of tarrying in that House of Pelopi, those human shambles, of denouncing Murder in its lair;—to fly, to reach his master, warn and shield him—that was the sole thought which crossed his confused, bewildered brain.

It might be from four to five minutes, that Lucretia, half stunned, half senseless, lay upon those floors; for, besides the violence of her fall, the shock of the struggle, upon nerves weakened by the agony of apprehension, occasioned by the imminent and unforeseen chance of detection, paralysed her wondrous vigour of mind and frame,—when Varney entered.

“They tell me she sleeps,” he said, in hoarse muttered accents, before he saw the prostrate form at his very feet. But Varney’s step, Varney’s voice, had awakened Lucretia’s reason to consciousness and the sense of peril. Rising, though with effort, she related hurriedly, what had passed.

“Fly—fly!” she gasped, as she concluded. “Fly—to detain, to secrete this man somewhere, for the next few hours. Silence him but till then—I have done the rest!”—and her finger pointed to the fatal ring.

Varney waited for no farther words; he hurried out, and made at once to the stables: his shrewdness conjectured that Beck would carry his tale elsewhere. The groom was already gone—(his fellows said) without a word, but towards the lodge that led to the Southampton road. Varney

ordered the swiftest horse the stables held to be saddled, and said, as he sprang on its back,

"I, too, must go towards Southampton—the poor young lady!—I must prepare your master—he is on his road back to us;" and the last word was scarce out of his lips, as the sparks flew from the flints under the horse's hoofs, and he spurred from the yard.

As he rode at full speed through the park, the villain's mind sped more rapidly than the animal he bestrode—sped from fear to hope—hope to assurance. Grant that the spy lived to tell his tale—incoherent, improbable as the tale would be—who would believe it? How easy to meet tale by tale! The man must own that he was secreted behind the tapestry;—wherefore but to rob? Detected by Madame Dalibard, he had coined this wretched fable. And the spy, too, could not live through the day—he bore Death with him as he rode—he fed its force by his speed—and the effects of the venom itself would be those of frenzy. Tush! his tale, at best, would seem but the ravings of delirium. Still, it was well to track him where he went,—delay him, if possible; and Varney's spurs plunged deep and deeper into the bleeding flanks: on desperately scoured the horse. He passed the lodge—he was on the road—a chaise and pair dashed by him—he heard not a voice exclaim "Varney!"—he saw not the wondering face of John Ardworth;—bending over the tossing mane—he was deaf, he was blind, to all without and around. A milestone glides by, another, and a third. Ha! his eyes can see now. The object of his chase is before him—he views distinctly, on the brow of yon hill, the horse and the rider, spurting fast, like himself. They descend the hill, horse and horseman, and are snatched from his sight. Up

the steep strains the pursuer. He is at the summit. He sees the fugitive before him, almost within hearing. Beck has slackened his speed; he seems swaying to and fro in the saddle. Ho, ho! the barbed ring begins to work in his veins! Varney looks round—not another soul is in sight—a deep wood skirts the road. Place and time seem to favour—Beck has reined in his horse—he bends low over the saddle, as if about to fall. Varney utters a half-suppressed cry of triumph, shakes his reins, and spurs on—when, suddenly (by the curve of the road, hid before,) another chaise comes in sight, close where Beck had wearily halted.

The chaise stops—Varney pulls in and draws aside to the hedge-row! Some one within the vehicle is speaking to the fugitive! May it not be St. John himself! To his rage and his terror, he sees Beck painfully dismount from his horse—sees him totter to the door of the chaise—sees a servant leap from the box, and help him up the step—sees him enter. It *must* be Percival on his return! Percival, to whom he tells that story of horror! Varney's brute-like courage forsook him—his heart was appalled. In one of those panics so common with that boldness which is but animal, his sole thought became that of escape. He turned his horse's head to the fence—forced his way desperately through the barrier—made into the wood, and sate there, cowering and listening, till in another minute he heard the wheels rattle on, and the horses gallop hard down the hill towards the park.

The autumn wind swept through the trees—it shook the branches of the lofty ash that overhung the Accursed One. What observer of nature knows not that peculiar sound which the ash gives forth in the blast—not the solemn murmur of the oak—not the hollow murmur of the beech, but a shrill

wail—a shriek, as of a human voice in sharp anguish. Varney shuddered, as if he had heard the death-cry of his intended victims! Through briars and thickets, torn by the thorns, bruised by the boughs—he plunged deeper and deeper into the wood—gained at length the main path cut through it—found himself in a lane, and rode on, careless whither, till he had reached a small town, about ten miles from Laughton, where he resolved to wait till his nerves had recovered their tone, and he could more calmly calculate the chances of safety.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LUCRETIA REGAINS HER SON.

It seemed as if now, when danger became most imminent and present—that that very danger served to restore to Lucretia Dalibard all her faculties, which during the earlier day had been steeped in a kind of dreary stupor. The absolute necessity of playing out her execrable part with all suitable and consistent hypocrisy, braced her into iron. But the disguise she assumed was a supernatural effort—it stretched to cracking every fibre of the brain. It seemed almost to herself, as if, her object once gained, either life or consciousness could hold out no more!

A chaise stopped at the porch—two gentlemen descended. The elder paused irresolutely, and at length, taking out a card, inscribed “Mr. Walter Ardworth,” said, “If Madame Dalibard can be spoken to for a moment, will you give her this card?”

The footman hesitatingly stared at the card, and then invited the gentlemen into the hall, while he took up the message. Not long had the visitor to wait, pacing the dark oak floors and gazing on the faded banners, before the servant reappeared—Madame Dalibard would see him. He followed his guide up the stairs; while his young companion turned from the hall, and seated himself musingly on one of the benches on the deserted terrace.

Grasping the arms of her chair with both hands, her eyes fixed eagerly on his face, Lucretia Dalibard awaited the welcome visitor.

Prepared as he had been for change, Walter was startled by the

ghastly alteration in Lucretia’s features, increased, as it was that moment, by all the emotions which raged within. He sank into the chair placed for him opposite Lucretia, and, clearing his throat, said, falteringly—

“I grieve indeed, madam, that my visit, intended to bring but joy, should chance thus inopportunist. The servant informed me, as we came up the stairs, that your niece was ill, and I sympathise with your natural anxiety—Susan’s only child, too—poor Susan!”

“Sir,” said Lucretia, impatiently, “these moments are precious. Sir—sir!—my son—my son!” and her eyes glanced to the door. “You have brought with you a companion,—does he wait without?—My son!”

“Madam, give me a moment’s patience. I will be brief, and compress what, in other moments, might be a long narrative, into a few sentences.”

Rapidly, then, Walter Ardworth passed over the details, unnecessary now to repeat to the reader; the injunctions of Braddell, the delivery of the child to the woman selected by his fellow-sectarian, (who, it seemed, by John Ardworth’s recent inquiries, was afterwards expelled the community, and who, there was reason to believe, had been the first seducer of the woman thus recommended). No clue to the child’s parentage had been given to the woman, with the sum entrusted for his maintenance, which sum had perhaps been the main cause of her reckless progress to infamy and ruin. The narrator

passed lightly over the neglect and cruelty of the nurse, to her abandonment of the child when the money was exhausted. Fortunately, she had overlooked the coral round its neck. By that coral, and by the initials, V. B., which Ardworth had had the precaution to have burned into the child's wrist, the lost son had been discovered; the nurse herself (found in the person of Martha Skeggs, Lucretia's own servant,) had been confronted with the woman to whom she gave the child, and recognised at once. Nor had it been difficult to obtain from her the confession which completed the evidence.

"In this discovery," concluded Ardworth, "the person I employed met your own agent, and the last links in the chain they traced together. But to *that* person,—to his zeal and intelligence,—you owe the happiness I trust to give you. He sympathised with me the more that he knew you personally, felt for your sorrows, and had a lingering belief that you supposed *him* to be the child you yearned for. Madam, thank my son for the restoration of your own!"

Without sound, Lucretia had listened to these details, though her countenance changed fearfully as the narrator proceeded. But now she groaned aloud and in agony.

"Nay, madam," said Ardworth, feelingly and in some surprise, "surely the discovery of your son should create gladder emotions. Though, indeed, you will be prepared to find that the poor youth so reared wants education and refinement, I have heard enough to convince me that his dispositions are good and his heart grateful. Judge of this yourself; he is in these walls—he is——"

"Abandoned by a harlot—reared by a beggar! My son!" interrupted Lucretia, in broken sentences. "Well, sir, have you discharged your task! Well have you replaced a mother!"

Before Ardworth could reply, loud and rapid steps were heard in the corridor, and a voice, cracked, indistinct, but vehement. The door was thrown open, and, half-supported by Captain Greville, half dragging him along—his features convulsed, whether by pain or passion,—the spy upon Lucretia's secrets, the denouncer of her crime, tottered to the threshold. Pointing to where she sat with his long, lean arm, Beck exclaimed—"Seize her! I 'cuse her, face to face, of the murder of her niece!—of—I told you, sir—I told you——"

"Madam," said Captain Greville, "you stand charged by this witness with the most terrible of human crimes. I judge you not. Your niece, I rejoice to hear, yet lives! Pray God that her death be not traced to those kindred hands!"

Turning her eyes from one to the other with a wandering stare, Lucretia Dalibard remained silent. But there was still scorn on her lip, and defiance on her brow. At last she said, slowly, and to Ardworth—

"Where is my son! You say, he is within these walls—call him forth to protect his mother! Give me, at least, my son—my son!"

Her last words were drowned by a fresh burst of fury from her denouncer. In all the coarsest invective his education could supply—in all the hideous vulgarities of his untutored dialect—in that uncurbed licentiousness of tone, look, and manner which passion, once aroused, gives to the dregs and scum of the populace, Beck poured forth his frightful charges—his frantic execrations. In vain Captain Greville strove to check him. In vain Walter Ardworth sought to draw him from the room. But while the poor wretch—maddening not more with the consciousness of the crime, than with the excitement of the poison in his blood—thus raved and stormed, a

terrible suspicion crossed Walter Ardworth: mechanically—as his grasp was on the accuser's arm—he bared the sleeve, and on the wrist were the dark blue letters, burned into the skin, and bearing witness to his identity with the lost Vincent Braddell.

“Hold, hold!” he exclaimed then—“hold, unhappy man!—it is your mother whom you denounce!”

Lucretia sprang up erect—her eyes seemed starting from her head: she caught at the arm pointed towards her in wrath and menace—and there, amidst those letters that proclaimed her son, was the small puncture surrounded by a livid circle, that announced her victim. In the same instant she discovered her child in the man who was calling down upon her head the hatred of Earth and the justice of Heaven, and knew herself his murderess.

She dropped the arm, and sank

back on the chair; and, whether the poison had now reached to the vitals, or whether so unwonted a passion in so frail a frame, sufficed for the death-stroke, Beck himself, with a low suffocated cry, slid from the hand of Ardworth, and, tottering a step or so, the blood gushed from his mouth, over Lucretia's robe;—his head drooped an instant, and falling, rested first upon her lap—then struck heavily upon the floor. The two men bent over him, and raised him in their arms—his eyes opened and closed—his throat rattled, and, as he fell back into their arms a corpse, a laugh rose close at hand—it rang through the walls, it was heard near and afar—above and below. Not an ear in that house that heard it not. In that laugh fled for ever, till the Judgment-day, from the blackened ruins of her lost soul, the reason of the murderess-mother.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE LOTS VANISH WITHIN THE URN.

VARNEY's self-commune restored to him his constitutional audacity. He returned to Laughton towards the evening, and held a long conference with Greville. Fortunately for him, perhaps, and happily for all, Helen had lost all more dangerous symptoms, and the physician who was in the house, saw in her state nothing not easily to be accounted for by natural causes. Percival had arrived, had seen Helen—no wonder she was better. Both from him and from Helen, Madame Dalibard's fearful condition was for the present concealed. Ardworth's story, and the fact of Beck's identity with Vincent Braddell, were also reserved for a later occasion. . . . The tale which Beck had poured into the ear of Greville, (when recognising the St. John livery the Captain stopped his chaise to inquire if Percival were at the Hall, and when thrilled by the hideous import of his broken reply, that gentleman had caused him to enter the vehicle to explain himself further) Varney with his wonted art and address, contrived to strip of all probable semblance. Evidently the poor lad had been already delirious, his story must be deemed the nightmare of his disordered reason. Varney insisted upon surgical examination as to the cause of his death—the membranes of the brain were found surcharged with blood, as in cases of great mental excitement—the slight puncture in the wrist, ascribed to the prick of a rusty nail, provoked no suspicion. If some doubts remained still on Greville's

acute mind, he was not eager to express, still less to act, upon them. Helen was declared to be out of danger. Percival was safe—why affix by minute inquiry into the alleged guilt of Madame Dalibard, (already so awfully affected by the death of her son and by the loss of her reason) so foul a stain on the honoured family of St. John? But Greville was naturally anxious to free the house as soon as possible, both of Varney and that ominous Lucretia, whose sojourn under its roof seemed accursed. He therefore readily assented when Varney proposed—as his obvious and personal duty, to take charge of his mother-in-law, and remove her to London for immediate advice.

At the dead of the black-clouded night—no moon and no stars—the son of Oliver Dalibard bore away the form of the once formidable Lucretia:—the *form*, for the mind was gone—that teeming, restless, and fertile intellect, which had carried along the projects, with the preter-human energies, of the fiend, was hurled into night and chaos. Manacled and bound, for at times her paroxysms were terrible, and all partook of the destructive and murderous character, which her faculties, when present, had betrayed, she was placed in the vehicle by the shrinking side of her accomplice.

Long before he arrived in London, Varney had got rid of his fearful companion. His chaise had stopped at the iron gates of a large building, somewhat out of the main road, and

the doors of the Madhouse closed on Lucretia Dalibard.

Varney then hastened to Dover with intention of flight into France; he was just about to step into the vessel when he was tapped rudely on the shoulder, and a determined voice said—"Mr. Gabriel Varney, you are my prisoner!"

"For what—some paltry debt?" said Varney haughtily.

"For forgery on the Bank of England!"

Varney's hand plunged into his vest. The officer seized it in time, and wrested the blade from his grasp. Once arrested for an offence it was impossible to disprove, although the very smallest of which his conscience might charge him, Varney sank into the blackest despair. Though he had often boasted, not only to others, but to his own vain breast, of the easy courage with which, when life ceased to yield enjoyment, he could dismiss it by the act of his own will—though he had possessed himself of Lucretia's murderous ring, and death, if fearful, was therefore at his command, self-destruction was the last thought that occurred to him—that morbid excitability of fancy, which, whether in his art or in his deeds, had led him to strange delight in horror, now served but to haunt him with the images of death in those ghastliest shapes familiar to them who look only into the bottom of the charnel, and see but the rat and the worm, and the loathsome agencies of corruption. It was not the despair of conscience that seized him, it was the abject clinging to life;—not the remorse of the soul, —*that* still slept within him, too noble an agency for one so debased—but the gross physical terror. As the fear of the tiger once aroused is more paralysing than that of the deer, proportioned to the savageness of a disposition to which fear is a novelty.

so the very boldness of Varney, coming only from the perfection of the nervous organisation, and unsupported by one moral sentiment, once struck down was corrupted into the vilest cowardice. With his audacity, his shrewdness forsook him. Advised by his lawyer to plead guilty, he obeyed, and the sentence of transportation for life gave him, at first, a feeling of reprieve; but when his imagination began to picture, in the darkness of his cell, all the true tortures of that penalty, not so much, perhaps, to the uneducated peasant felon, inured to toil, and familiarised with coarse companionship, as to one pampered like himself by all soft and half womanly indulgencies—the shaven hair—the convict's dress—the rigorous privation—the drudging toil;—the exile seemed as grim as the grave. In the dotage of faculties smitten into drivelling—he wrote to the Home Office, offering to disclose secrets connected with crimes that had hitherto escaped or baffled justice, on condition that his sentence might be repealed, or mitigated into the gentler forms of ordinary transportation. No answer was returned to him—but his letter provoked research—circumstances connected with his uncle's death, and with various other dark passages in his life—sealed against him all hope of more merciful sentence, and when some acquaintances whom his art had made for him, and who, while grieving for his crime, saw in it some excuses, (ignorant of his feller deeds,) sought to intercede in his behalf; the reply of the Home Office was obvious, "He is a fortunate man to have been tried and condemned for his least offence." Not one indulgence that could distinguish him from the most execrable ruffian, condemned to the same sentence, was conceded.

The idea of the gibbet lost all its

horror. Here was a gibbet for every hour! No hope—no escape. Already that Future Doom which comprehends the 'For ever' opened upon him, black and fathomless. The hour-glass was broken up—the hand of the time-piece was arrested. The Beyond stretched before him, without limit, without goal—on into Annihilation or into Hell.

EPILOGUE TO PART THE SECOND.

STAND, O Man! upon the hill-top—
in the stillness of the evening hour
—and gaze, not with joyous, but
with contented eyes, upon the beautiful world around thee! See, where the mists, soft and dim, rise over the green meadows, through which the rivulet steals its way! See where, broadest and stillest, the wave expands to the full smile of the setting sun—and the willow that trembles on the breeze—and the oak that stands firm in the storm, are reflected back, peaceful both, from the clear glass of the tides! See, where, begirt by the gold of the harvests, and backed by the pomp of a thousand groves—the roofs of the town, bask, noiseless, in the calm glow of the sky. Not a sound from those abodes floats in discord to thine ear,—only from the church-tower, soaring high above the rest, perhaps, faintly heard through the stillness, swells the note of the holy bell. Along the mead low-skims the swallow—on the wave, the silver circle, breaking into spray, shows the sport of the fish. See, the Earth, how serene, though all eloquent of activity and life! See the Heavens, how benign, though dark clouds, by yon mountain, blend the purple with the gold! Gaze contented, for Good is around thee—not joyous, for Evil is the shadow of Good! Let thy soul pierce through the veil of the senses, and thy sight plunge deeper than the surface which gives delight to thine eye. Below the glass of that river, the pike darts on his prey; the circle in the wave, the soft plash amongst the reeds, are but signs of Destroyer and of Victim. In the ivy wound the oak by the margin, the owl

hungers for the night, which shall give its beak and its talons living food for its young; and the spray of the willow trembles with the wing of the redbreast, whose bright eye sees the worm on the sod. Canst thou count too, O Man! all the cares—all the sins—that those noiseless roof-tops conceal? With every curl of that smoke to the sky, a human thought soars as dark, a human hope melts as briefly. And the bell from the church-tower, that to thy ear gives but music, perhaps knolls for the dead. The swallow but chases the moth, and the cloud that deepens the glory of the heaven, and the sweet shadows on the earth, nurses but the thunder that shall rend the grove, and the storm that shall devastate the harvests. Not with fear, not with doubt, recognise, O Mortal, the presence of Evil in the world.* Hush thy heart in the humbleness of awe, that its mirror may reflect as serenely the shadow as the light. Vainly, for its moral, dost thou gaze on the landscape, if thy soul puts no check on the dull delight of the senses. Two wings only raise thee to the summit of Truth—where the Cherub shall comfort the sorrow, where the Seraph shall enlighten the joy. Dark as

* Not, indeed, that the evil here narrated is the *ordinary* evil of the world. The lesson it inculcates would be lost, if so construed; but that the mystery of evil, whatever its degree, only increases the necessity of faith in the vindication of the contrivance which requires infinity for its range, and eternity for its consummation. It is in the existence of evil that man finds his duties, and his soul its progress.

ebon, spreads the one wing, white as snow gleams the other—mournful as thy *reason* when it descends into the deep—exulting as thy *faith* when it springs to the day-star.

Beck sleeps in the churchyard of Laughton. He had lived to frustrate the monstrous design intended to benefit himself, and to become the instrument, while the victim of the dread Eumenides. That done, his life passed with the crimes that had gathered around, out of the sight of mortals. Helen slowly regained her health in the atmosphere of love and happiness; and Lady Mary soon learned to forget the fault of the father in the virtues of the Child. Married to Percival, Helen fulfilled the destinies of woman's genius, in calling forth into action man's earnest duties. She breathed into Percival's warm beneficent heart, her own more steadfast and divine intelligence. Like him she grew ambitious, by her he became distinguished. While I write, fair children play under the cedars of Laughton. And the husband tells the daughters to resemble their mother;—and the wife's highest praise to the boys is—“You have spoken truth or done good like your father.”

John Ardworth has not paused in his career, nor belied the promise of his youth. Though, the elder Ardworth, partly by his own exertions, partly by his second marriage with the daughter of the French merchant, (through whose agency he had corresponded with Fielden,) had realised a moderate fortune, it but sufficed for his own wants, and for the children of his later nuptials, upon whom the bulk of it was settled. Hence, happily perhaps for himself and others, the easy circumstances of his father allowed to John Ardworth no exemption from labour. His success in the single episode from **active life to literature**, did not

intoxicate or mislead him. He knew that his real element was not in the field of letters, but in the world of men. Not undervaluing the noble destinies of the Author, he felt that those destinies, if realised to the utmost, demanded powers other than his own; and that man is only true to his genius when the genius is at home in his career. He would not renounce for a brief celebrity distant and solid fame. He continued for a few years in patience and privation, and confident self-reliance, to drudge on, till the occupation for the intellect fed by restraint, and the learning accumulated by study, came and found the whole man developed and prepared. Then, he rose rapidly from step to step—then, still retaining his high enthusiasm, he enlarged his sphere of action from the cold practice of law, into those vast social improvements which law, rightly regarded, should lead, and vivify, and create. Then, and long before the twenty years he had imposed on his probation had expired, he gazed again upon the senate and the abbey, and saw the doors of the one open to his resolute tread, and anticipated the glorious sepulchre, which heart and brain should win him in the other.

John Ardworth has never married. When Percival rebukes him for his celibacy, his lip quivers slightly, and he applies himself with more dogged earnestness to his studies or his career. But he never complains that his lot is lonely or his affections void. For him who aspires, and for him who loves, life may lead through the thorns, but it never stops in the desert.

On the minor personages involved in this history, there is little need to dwell. Mr. Fielden, thanks to St. John, has obtained a much better living in the rectory of Laughton but has found new sources of pleasur

trouble for himself, in seeking to drill into the mind of Percival's eldest son the elements of Euclid, and the principles of Latin syntax.

We may feel satisfied that the Mivers' will go on much the same while trade enriches without refining, and while, nevertheless, right feelings in the common paths of duty may unite charitable emotions with graceless language.

We may rest assured that the poor widow who had reared the lost son of Lucretia, received from the bounty of Percival all that could comfort her for his death.

We have no need to track the dull crimes of Martha, or the quick, cunning vices of Grabman, to their inevitable goals, in the hospital or the prison, the dunghill or the gibbet.

Of the elder Ardworth our parting notice may be less brief. We first saw him in sanguine and generous youth, with higher principles and clearer insight into honour than William Mainwaring. We have seen him next a spendthrift and a fugitive, his principles debased, and his honour dimmed. He presents to us no uncommon example of the corruption engendered by that vulgar self-indulgence which mortgages the morrow for the pleasures of to-day. No Deity presides where Prudence is absent. Man, a world in himself, requires for the development of his faculties, patience; and for the balance of his actions, order. Even where he had deemed himself most oppressively made the martyr—viz., in the profession of mere political opinions, Walter Ardworth had but followed out into theory the restless, uncalculating impatience, which had brought adversity on his manhood, and, despite his constitutional cheerfulness, shadowed his age with remorse. The death of the child committed to his charge, long (perhaps to the last)

embittered his pride in the son whom without merit of his own, Providence had spared to a brighter fate. But for the faults which had banished him his country, and the habits which had seared his sense of duty, could that child have been so abandoned, and have so perished?

It remains only to cast our glance over the punishments which befel the sensual villany of Varney,—the intellectual corruption of his fell stepmother.

These two persons had made a very trade of those crimes to which man's law awards death. They had said in their hearts that they would dare the crime, but elude the penalty. By wonderful subtlety, craft, and dexterity, which reduced guilt to a science, Providence seemed, as in disdain of the vulgar instruments of common retribution, to concede to them that which they had schemed for,—escape from the rope and gibbet. Varney, saved from detection of his darker and more inexpiable crimes, punished only for the least one—retained what had seemed to him the master boon—life! Safer still from the law, no mortal eye had plumbed the profound night of Lucretia's awful guilt. Murderess of husband and son, the blinded law bade her go, unscathed, unsuspected. Direct as from Heaven, without a cloud, fell the thunderbolt. Is the life they have saved worth the prizing? Doth the chalice, unspilt on the ground, not return to the hand? Is the sudden pang of the hangman more fearful than the doom which they breathe and bear? Look, and judge!

Behold, that dark ship on the waters! Its burthens are not O. Ormus and Tyre. No goodly merchandise doth it waft over the wave, no blessing cleaves to its sails, freighted with terror and with guilt, with remorse and despair, or more ghastly than either, the sullen apathy

of souls hardened into stone, it carries the dregs and offal of the old world to populate the new. On a bench in that ship, sit side by side two men, companions assigned to each other. Pale, abject, cowering, all the bravery rent from his garb, all the gay insolence vanished from his brow—can that nollow-eyed, haggard wretch, be the same man whose senses opened on every joy, whose nerves mocked at every peril? But beside him, with a grin of vile glee on his features, all muscle and brawn in the form, all malice, at once spiteful and dull, in the heavy eye, sits his fit comrade—the Grave-stealer! At the first glance each had recognised each, and the prophecy and the vision rushed back upon the daintier convict. If he seek to escape from him, the grave-stealer claims him as a prey, he threatens him with his eye as a slave, he kicks him with his hoof as they sit, and laughs at the writhing of the pain. Carry on your gaze from the ship:—hear the cry from the mast-head—see the land arise from the waste! A land without hope! At first, despite the rigour of the Home Office, the education and intelligence of Varney have their price—the sole crime for which he is convicted is not of the darkest. He escapes from that hideous comrade, he can teach as a school-master;—let his brain work, not his hands! But the most irredeemable of convicts are ever those of nurture, and birth, and culture better than the ruffian-rest. You may enlighten the clod, but the meteor still must feed on the marsh: And the pride, and the vanity, work where the crime itself seems to lose its occasion. Ever avid, ever grasping, he falls, step by step, in the foul sink, and the colony sees in Gabriel Varney its most pestilent rogue; arch-convict amidst convicts, doubly lost amongst the damned; they banish him to the sternest of the penal settlements—

they send him forth with the vilest to break stones upon the roads. Shrivelled, and bowed, and old, prematurely—see that sharp face peering forth amongst that gang, scarcely human,—see him cringe to the lash of the scornful overseer—see the pairs chained together, night and day! Ho, ho! his comrade hath found him again, the Artist and the Grave-stealer leashed together! Conceive that fancy, so nurtured by habit—those tastes, so womanised by indulgence—the one suggesting the very horrors that are not, the other revolting at all toil as a torture.

But intellect not all gone, though hourly dying heavily down to the level of the brute, yet schemes for delivery and escape. Let the plot ripen, and the heart bound: break his chain—set him free—send him forth to the wilderness! Hark, the whoop of the wild men! See those things that ape our species dance and gibber round the famishing hunted wretch. Hark how he shrieks at the torture! How they tear, and they pinch, and they burn, and they rend him! They, too, spare his life—it is charmed! A Caliban amidst Calibans, they heap him with their burthens, and feed him on their offal. Let him live; he loved life for himself, he has cheated the gibbet,—LET HIM LIVE! Let him watch, let him once more escape; all naked and mangled, let him wander back to the huts of his gang. Lo! where he kneels, the foul tears streaming down, and cries aloud,—“I have broken all your laws, I will tell you all my crimes; I ask but one sentence—hang me up—let me die!” And from the gang groan many voices—“Hang us up—let us die!” The overseer turns on his heel, and Gabriel Varney again is chained to the laughing Grave-stealer.

You enter those gates so jealously guarded—you pass, with a quick beat of the heart, by those groups on the

lawn, though they are harmless;—you follow your guide through those passages; where the open doors will permit, you see the emperor brandish his sceptre of straw—hear the speculator counting his millions—sigh, where the maiden sits smiling, the return of her shipwrecked lover—er gravely shake the head and hurry on, where the fanatic raves his Apocalypse, and reigns in judgment on the world;—you pass by strong grates into corridors gloomier and more remote. Nearer and nearer, you hear the yell, and the oath and blaspheming curse—you are in the heart of the Mad-house, where they chain those at once cureless and dangerous—who have but sense enough left them to smite, and to throttle, and to murder. Your guide opens that door, massive as a wall, you see (as we, who narrate, have seen her) Lucretia Dalibard:—a grisly, squalid, ferocious mockery of a human being—more appalling and more fallen, than Dante ever fabled in his spectres, than Swift ever scoffed in his Ya-hoos!—Only where all other feature seems to have lost its stamp of humanity, still burns with unquenchable fever—the red devouring eye. That eye never seems to sleep, or, in sleep, the lid never closes over it. As you shrink from its light, it seems to you as if the mind that had lost coherence and harmony, still retained latent and incommunicable *consciousness* as its curse. For days, for weeks—that awful maniac will preserve obstinate, unbroken silence; but, as the eye never closes, so the hands never rest—they open and grasp, as if at some palpable object on which they close, vice-like, as a bird's talons on its prey—sometimes they wander over that brow, where the furrows seem torn as the thunder scars, as if to wipe from it a stain, or charm from it a pang—sometimes they gather up the hem of that sordid robe, and seem, for hours together,

striving to rub from it a soil. Then, out from prolonged silence, without cause or warning, will ring, peal after peal (till the frame, exhausted with the effort, sinks senseless into stupor) the frightful laugh. But speech, intelligible and coherent, those lips rarely yield.

There are times, indeed, when the attendants are persuaded that her mind in part returns to her; and those times, experience has taught them to watch with peculiar caution. The crisis evinces itself by a change in the manner—by a quick apprehension of all that is said—by a straining anxious look at the dismal walls—by a soft fawning docility—by murmured complaints of the chains that fetter—and (though, as we have said, but very rarely,) by prayers, that seem rational, for greater ease and freedom.

In the earlier time of her dread captivity, perhaps, when it was believed at the asylum that she was a patient of condition, with friends who cared for her state, and would liberally reward her cure,—they, in those moments, relaxed her confinement, and sought the gentler remedies their art employs; but then invariably, and, it was said, with a cunning that surpassed all the proverbial astuteness of the mad, she turned this indulgence to the most deadly uses—she crept to the pallet of some adjacent sufferer weaker than herself, and the shrieks that brought the attendants into the cell, scarcely saved the intended victim from her hands. It seemed, in those imperfectly lucid intervals, as if the reason only returned to guide her to destroy—only to animate the broken mechanism into the beast of prey.

Years have now passed since her entrance within those walls. He who placed her there never had returned—he had given a false name—no clue

to him ~~was~~ obtained—the gold he had left was but the quarter's pay. When Varney had been first apprehended, Percival requested the younger Ardworth to seek the forger in prison—and to question him as to Madame Dalibard; but Varney was then so apprehensive that, even if still insane, her very ravings might betray his share in her crimes, or still more, if she recovered, that the remembrance of her son's murder would awaken the repentance and the confession of crushed despair, that the wretch had judged it wiser to say that his accomplice was no more—that her insanity had already terminated in death. The place of her confinement thus continued a secret locked in his own breast. Egotist to the last, she was henceforth dead to him—why not to the world? Thus the partner of her crimes had cut off her sole resource, in the compassion of her unconscious kindred;—thus the gates of the living world were shut to her evermore. Still, in a kind of compassion, or as an object of experiment—as a subject to be dealt with unscrupulously in that living dissection-hall—her grim gaolers did not grudge her an asylum. But, year after year, the attendance was more slovenly—the treatment more harsh; and strange to say, while the features were scarcely recognisable—while the form underwent all the change which the shape suffers when mind deserts it, that prodigious vitality which belonged to the temperament still survived. No signs of decay are yet visible. Death, as if spurning the carcass, stands inexorably afar off. Baffler of man's law, *thou*, too, hast escaped with life! Not for thee is the sentence, "Blood for blood!" Thou livest—thou mayst pass the extremest boundaries of age. Live on, to wipe the blood from thy robe!—LIVE ON!

Not for the coarse object of creating

an idle terror—not for the shock upon the nerves and the thrill of the grosser interest which the narrative of crime creates, has this book been compiled from the facts and materials afforded to the author. When the great German poet describes, in not the least noble of his lyrics, the sudden apparition of some 'Monster Fate' in the circles of careless Joy, he assigns to him who teaches the world through parable or song, the right to invoke the spectre. It is well to be awakened at times from the easy common-place that surrounds our habitual life—to cast broad and steady, and patient light on the darker secrets of the heart; on the vaults and caverns of the social state, over which we build the market-place and the palace. We recover from the dread, and the awe, and the half-incredulous wonder, to set closer watch upon our inner and hidden selves. In him who cultivates only the reason, and suffers the heart and the spirit to lie waste and dead, who schemes, and constructs, and revolves round the axle of self, unwarmed by the affections, unpoised by the attraction of right,—lies the germ Fate might ripen into the guilt of Olivier Dalibard. Let him who but lives through the senses, spread the wings of the fancy in the gaudy glare of enjoyment corrupted, avid to seize, and impatient to toil, whose faculties are curbed but to the range of physical perception, whose very courage is but the strength of the nerves, who developes but the animal as he stifles the man,—let him gaze on the villany of Varney, and startle to see some magnified shadow of himself thrown dimly on the glass! Let those who, with powers to command and passions to wing the powers, would sweep without scruple from the aim to the end—who, trampling beneath their footprint of iron the humanities that bloom up in

their path—would march to success with the proud stride of the destroyer, hear, in the laugh of yon maniac murderess, the glee of the fiend they have wooed to their own souls! Guard well, O Heir of Eternity, the portal of sin—the *thought*! From the thought to the deed, the subtler thy brain, and the bolder thy courage, the briefer and straighter is the way. Read these pages in disdain of self-commune—they shall revolt thee, not instruct; read them, looking steadfastly within, and how humble soever the art of the narrator, the facts he narrates, like all history, shall teach by example. Every human Act, good or ill, is an

Angel to guide or to warn;* and the deeds of the worst have messages from Heaven to the listening hearts of the best. Amidst the glens in the Apennine,—in the lone wastes of Calabria, the sign of the Cross marks the spot, where a deed of violence has been done; on all that pass by the road, the symbol has varying effect; sometimes it startles the conscience, sometimes it invokes the devotion; the robber drops the blade, the priest counts the rosary. So is it with the record of crime: and in the witness of Guilt, Man is thrilled with the whisper of Religion.

* Our Acts our Angels are—or good or ill;
The fatal shadows that walk by us still.



NOTE.

CERTAIN criticisms on "LUCRETIA," at its first appearance, having been made the vehicle for remarks of no common virulence on the Author's general writings, he took the occasion thus afforded to him, to put forth in the following pages, entitled, "A WORD TO THE PUBLIC," not only a vindication of his own ethical designs, in his various fictions, but an exposition of the prerogatives of inventive art in the selection of the agencies employed towards moving the passions of pity and terror. The "WORD TO THE PUBLIC" is still retained as an appendix to this romance: for though it may be no longer needed as a defence of the works which Time itself has sufficed to clear from the charges to which they were once subjected, it may still have an interest to the general reader as a somewhat elaborate analysis of the main causes that conduce to emotions legitimately tragic. If, therefore, it have any value, it is less as the vindication which an author makes of his own works, than as the result of the study he has devoted to the masterpieces of others;—in short, as a critical essay—offering suggestions as to the grander uses of imaginative compositions in the passions which they openly sway, and the warnings which they unconsciously bequeath.

A WORD TO THE PUBLIC;

CONTAINING

HINTS TOWARDS A CRITICAL ESSAY UPON THE ARTISTIC PRINCIPLES
AND ETHICAL DESIGNS OF FICTION.

It is not as a retort to attacks that I write these pages. They are designed, it is true, to remove errors, whether of wilful misstatement, or honest misconception, on subjects affecting myself. But as those subjects are connected with interests in literature, very general and important, I shall endeavour to preserve the dispassionate tone proper

to an inquiry addressed to the candour of the Public, and the consideration of educated men.

I pass by all assaults that may appear to have exceeded the due licence of criticism with the single remark,—that wherever personal motives are strong enough to violate the ordinary decorum of literary censure, the reader must be prepared to expect that they will suffice to corrupt all integrity of statement. Thus extracts will be garbled and misquoted—sentences stripped of the context that explains them,—and opinions, which the writer most earnestly holds up to reprobation, and places in the lips of characters whom he draws but to condemn, be deliberately cited as the sentiments of the author himself. I do not stop to comment on artifices like these; if, from no broader principle than that of justice to the author, they need rebuke or are capable of discouragement—discouragement and rebuke will come more efficiently from others; nor should I have made even this brief reference to matters not immediately essential to my argument, if some temporary injustice to the Author were the only evil such practices could possibly effect; but thus, a work the most innocent can not only be represented as mischievous, but in reality rendered so. Let me forestal the subsequent inquiry, and assume for the moment, that the true moral, whether of “*Eugene Aram*,” or the “*Children of Night*,” be either salutary or harmless, and then let me suppose it gravely asserted in some two or three of those popular journals which penetrate every corner of society, read alike by the educated and the ignorant, the good and the bad—the sole vehicles of literary information to those whom it is most facile and most dangerous to mislead—that the author, a man of some social position, and some acknowledged repute in letters, lends all the weight of his name and authority to the defence and encouragement of crime,—is the author himself the party most seriously aggrieved? The injury done to *him* may be wholly effaced by the gradual influence of the judicious, and the tranquil investigation of time; but is it so easy to efface the injury effected by garbled extracts, and wilful misrepresentation, upon minds uninstructed and perverted, at which the book itself, with its real lessons, never may arrive, and which only too readily accept the sanction that the newspaper assures them it affords?

So far as concerns myself, I am contented to appeal, from assailants of this kind, to those cultivators of literature with whom I may claim fellowship, and to that Public, who, I trust, have connected gentler associations with my name.

With regard to those purely literary faults and defects which afford

the fair questions to criticism, though, some years since, I might have been tempted to enter into the vindication of a few, at least, out of the many with which I have been charged, I am not now disposed to intrude upon the public a defence against censures morally unimportant and legitimately made. Good or bad, my works have been written with such care as I could bestow on them ; and in all that affects their literary reputation alone, I willingly leave them to that calm and equitable decision between praise and blame which time only can pronounce.

I confine myself to questions of graver moment than those which relate to the mere skill or ability displayed by a living writer in the treatment of the subjects he selects, and if I would borrow something from indulgence, it is only a certain leniency whenever an earnest wish to correct misconception may render me tedious in explanation. For the charges against me are not limited to a single work ; and it is necessary that I should invite an inquiry, from the warrantable conclusions of which, I trust, my entire vindication will proceed—viz., into the recognised principles of fiction, and the fair liberty in the choice of materials, which it is the interest, both of art and the public, to permit to imaginative writers.

In this discussion, I ask, then, but for that patience with which we listen to the most ordinary mechanic, when at home in the subject of a craft to which his toil and life have been applied. For several years, I have studied the art of which I treat ; and it is but reasonable to suppose that I should speak with some knowledge of the principles which, applied to practice, have gained me whatever reputation I possess. I will presume that the reader enters on the consideration of the matters which he is called upon to adjudicate, not with a mind steeled against conviction, and determined to resist, but rather with a jurymen's sincere desire to judge for himself, and exclude from the trial all that he has heard out of court ;—regretting generously if, at the close, he is obliged to condemn, rejoicing honestly if his reason and his conscience allow him to acquit. And if there be many who come to this inquiry with minds so prepared, amongst them there may be those who unthinkingly have done me wrong, and who, after hearing the evidence I shall adduce, and more carefully considering the laws by which I should be judged, may depart from the hearing with a manly desire to repair an injury—small indeed, if it were as lightly felt as it is heedlessly inflicted !

It is not so easy, as at first it may appear, to decide upon the moral tendencies and designs of a writer. Upon no conceivable subject have

more signal mistakes been made ; and none affords us a more memorable warning to judge of others with modest charity and cautious deliberation. It would take a large catalogue to contain the titles of those books which have been denounced as immoral and mischievous, and which are now universally acknowledged as the sources of harmless pleasure or ethical instruction. From the father of poetry, from Homer himself, who has been charged "with degrading the gods, and demoralising man"—"sanctioning perjury and avarice,"—"holding up even parricides to reverence"—"teaching what is wicked, and debasing what is good"—through the long order of his illustrious children,—we can find few whom we now recognise amongst our most genial civilisers, and our gentlest teachers, who have not, at one time or another, been subjected to the common charge of immoral tendency and pernicious effect.

Since the good Bishop Heliodorus saw his tale of *Theagenes and Chariclea* condemned by a synod, as prejudicial to the young ; since Mahomet denounced in the Koran those harmless tales, of which the *Arabian Nights* are a sample, novelists have been treated, if possible, more harshly than their elder brothers the poets. There is no novel we more willingly give to the schoolboy, than *Don Quixote*, yet Cervantes has been driven to find in Sismondi a defence "against those who consider *Don Quixote* the most melancholy book ever written," and (adds Mr. Hallam) "who no doubt consider it also as one of the most immoral, as chilling and pernicious in its influence on the social converse of mankind, as '*The Prince*' of Machiavel is in their political intercourse."* There is no tale that with safer conscience we submit to the simplest understanding, than the *Rasselas* of Dr. Johnson, and yet it has been charged with instilling the same, more than doubtful, moral, that freezes men's hopes in the mockery of *Candide*.† Philosophers the most earnest, moralists the most rigid, have been as liable to this erring accusation, as the wildest of poets and the most careless of romancers. Locke presides over our academies, yet he has been denounced as the founder of a sect of materialists. Cudworth is received amongst the holiest champions of religion, yet Warburton informs us that he never published the second part of his work, because of the malignity that had visited the first. In the same painful and warning mistake of shallow judgments, our divines themselves have

* Hallam's History of Literature, vol. iii. p. 156.

† Voltaire congratulated himself, indeed, that "*Candide*" had appeared before "*Rasselas*," so that the scoffing wit might not be accused of plagiarising his moral from our serious and sturdy Doctor.

been assailed, and the twin lights of our religious literature, Tillotson and Taylor, calumniated—the one as a Socinian in disguise, the other as a schismatic in design.

Time brings justice at the end, and vindicates the name if it preserves the work. Happy he, whose justification comes before the hand has forgot its cunning, and the tomb shut out the sweets of the atonement from the bitterness of the wrong! Happy he, too, who, early inured to calumny, grows indifferent to its sting! He will not, at least, die a lunatic, like Ritson, “stabbed by assassins in the dark,”—nor like Cummys, waste away “in the slow fever produced by an anonymous assault.”*

Do not let me be suspected of so egregious a conceit, as implying a claim to association with the lofty names that I have cited. I but use the argument the citations suggest, to establish the simple truth which literary history affords to a more intelligent, and I trust, a more liberal age—viz., that the public should receive with great caution rash accusations against the motives of authors and the latent immorality of works. For, easy to the lowest understanding is this general charge of immoral tendency and object—and tempting it is to malice, when it cannot deny the literary reputation which it envies—to assail the moral design, because *that* (always more or less complicated) needs some effort beyond the commonplace indifference of the public to perceive and to defend. Of whatever is plainly obscene and licentious, of whatever openly assails the acknowledged principles of religion, or saps the moral foundations of society, all men may judge; and on these, at least in our own age, no differences of opinion are likely to exist. But the wise and the honest will be wary of ascribing to writers secret tendencies and objects at variance, not only with the designs they announce, but the reputation accorded to them by judges, whether at home or abroad, uninfluenced by personal predilections, or political bias. And I fear that the writer, the most really dangerous to society is to be found in the critic, who bids the young and unthinking search, amidst the most popular forms of literature, for excuses to vice and sanctions to crime, which the author himself never intended, and which, without such directions, no reader would have suspected. It is critics like these who would pervert to poison the most innocent intellectual nutriment; who would interpret the exhortations of St. Augustine into an appeal to the passions, or the “whole Duty of Man” into a libel on one’s neighbour. Shortly after Addison’s “*Cato*” had appeared

upon the stage, an unhappy person destroyed himself, leaving upon his table a paper with these words—

“That must be good
Which Cato did and Addison approved.”

One must mournfully regret this poor man's perverse misconstruction of “*Cato* ;” yet who can say, for that reason, that “*Cato*” is dangerous, or that Addison sanctioned suicide? But, suppose that Addison had lived, and “*Cato*” been produced, in our day, and suppose that some writer in one of our popular journals had, after some prelude upon “morbid idiosyncracies and the frequency of suicides,” instead of removing from such “morbid idiosyncracies” the dangerous impression that Addison approved self-slaughter—preferred rather to gratify a spleen against the poet, in asserting that the design of the tragedy and the purpose of the author *were* devoted to the mischievous vindication of suicide—would not that writer have incurred the gravest responsibilities, afforded to “morbid idiosyncracies” the very stimulus it was his duty to withhold, and encouraged the very error it was his duty to expose? Let the editor of every influential journal weigh well the considerations this reflection should suggest, and perhaps he may confess that the more readily an author's intention may be misconceived by sickly or ignorant minds, the more the popular reviewer, whose opportunities give him the quickest and readiest facility towards correcting such mistakes, should seek not to confirm but dispel the dangerous misconception.

It is not given to all to have genius—it is given to all to have honesty of purpose; an ordinary writer may have this in common with the greatest—that he may compose his works with sincere and distinct views of promoting truth and administering to knowledge. I claim this intention fearlessly for myself. And if, contrary to my most solemn wishes, and my most thoughtful designs, any one of my writings can be shown by dispassionate argument, to convey lessons tending to pervert the understanding, and confound the eternal distinction between right and wrong, I will do my best to correct the error, by stamping on it my own condemnation, and omitting it from the list of those it does not shame me to acknowledge.

Every reader, who has honoured my books with some attention, must long since have recognised in their very imperfections as works of art—the favourite and peculiar studies of their author; some, especially, of the companions of my youth, must often have traced to those inquiries, which we pursued together through the labyrinth of metaphysics, and

amidst the ingenious speculations of writers who have sought by the analysis of our ideas to arrive at the springs of our manifold varieties in conduct, that over-indulgence of moralising deductions, and those often tedious attempts to explain the workings of mind, which have weakened the effect of my characters, and interrupted the progress of my plots. But no man can have made the study of the great investigators of human conduct his passion and his habit, and ever consciously and wilfully meditate a work at variance with morality ;—more likely is it that he will err in the opposite extreme, and undertake no work, however light, without a purpose too sharply definite. Even in the object on which he is most intent, it is true that he may err,—the gravest moralists, the wisest divines, have so erred ; human judgment cannot be infallible :

“ Tacere
Tutum semper erit.”—

“ If one would be safe, one has no resource but to be silent.” But an error of this kind is one only of mistaken, yet honest intention, and may surely be exposed, without heated invectives, and calumnious personalities.

What is the charge that has been brought against me—urged and re-urged, in words which I will not trust myself to repeat, and in spirit which I will not pause to expose ? I state its broad substance, I believe fairly in this, “ That I have had a morbid and mischievous passion for treating of crime and guilt—that it is the prevailing character of my books to make heroes of criminals and felons.”

Now it is the interest of all writers, from the greatest poet to the meanest novelist, that the due licence of fiction in the materials it selects, should be clearly laid down and generally admitted. And it is no less to the interest of the public, that writers should not be scared, by tacit acquiescence in charges most painful to honourable men, from whatever exposition of evil as it exists—whatever investigation of the human mind, in its sublimity or its baseness, its virtues or its guilt, the uniform example of received authorities in literature, has proved it to be salutary or safe to permit to the scope of the poet, and the purpose of the teacher.

I shall proceed to show that, if the delineation of crime *did* afford the ordinary and favourite subject of my works—if criminals or felons *were* made what is called the heroes (that is, the leading characters) in all or most of them,—such a charge would only prove the ignorance of those who advance it, whether of the most acknowledged privileges of fiction, or the scope of the moral which writers the most blameless

have been left at liberty to develop and enforce. But the charge itself is so utterly untrue, that a single glance over the list of my publications will suffice to refute it. I annex that list as my reply :

PELHAM.

THE DISOWNED.

DEVEREUX.

GODOLPHIN.

*PAUL CLIFFORD.

THE PILGRIMS OF THE RHINE.

*EUGENE ARAM.

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

RIENZI.

THE CONQUEST OF GRENADA.

ERNEST MALTRAVERS, 1st Part.

ERNEST MALTRAVERS, 2nd Part ; (first printed as ALICE.)

NIGHT AND MORNING.

ZANONI.

THE LAST OF THE BARONS.

*LUCRETIA.

So that out of a list of sixteen works of fiction (besides five Plays), the essays called "England and the English," and "The Student," a History of Athens, (and a volume or two of poems,*) the three to which I have prefixed an asterisk, are the *only* books in which felons or criminals have been made the heroes. In works professing to treat of human life in all its complexities, this is surely but a small proportion assigned to the express delineation of human crimes. And this list alone, to those who have read the works, is a sufficient answer to the charge—that it has been *my habit* as an author to select criminals and felons as my heroes. Five of the fictions I have cited are devoted to the historical illustration of former times, with whatever images, fair or noble, the age might afford, or the progress of the narrative present ; six to those circles of modern society, in which it was difficult to avoid the opposite reproach of dealing exclusively with the more polished or more frivolous classes, and forgetting, that beneath the surface of manners, grave and stern lessons are to be found—yes,

* Including a translation of Schiller, to which I could have had no reasonable inducement to devote the labour of more than two years, except that of rendering more familiar to my countrymen a collection of Poems, universally considered to create, upon the whole, moral impressions peculiarly pure and elevating.

even in the guilt and the woe, which are at work within the deeps; and two out of the number ("Zanoni" and "The Pilgrims of the Rhine,") are dedicated to fancies which may be called, if you please, too visionary and unreal, but are wholly remote from that grosser and more actual world of evil and sin, to which I am accused of having morbidly confined my invention, or monotonously directed my research.

In each and all of these, no doubt, there are (could they paint life without, or has any novelist attempted to do so?)—characters good and bad. But in none of my books (save the three before mentioned) has crime been made the leading agency, or a criminal the predominant character. In most of them, indeed, the fairer and gentler side of human nature, has been not unfavourably exhibited; in most of them, I believe, the characters that remain the more vividly clear in the remembrance of an impartial reader, will be associated with such qualities as dignify or endear our species.

To only *three* fictions out of *sixteen*, then, does the charge so indiscriminately made against all, shrink in its application;—viz., that "I have sought materials in crime, and heroes in criminals." We come, then, at once to a question, which common sense and universal authority ought long since to have decided—viz., "How far the delineation of crime is a legitimate object of fictitious composition."

It would seem from the hackneyed repetition of the same accusation against me, and the vehemence with which it is accompanied, that I had had the discredit to introduce into fiction some hideous innovation, opposed by the greatest writers or at variance with the usual privileges of my calling. But what is the fact? Has not the delineation of crime, in every age—been the more especial and chosen thesis of the greatest masters of art quoted to us as authorities and held up to us as models? The parricide of *Cedipus*, furnishes inspiration to the all-perfect and all-polished genius of *Sophocles*; *Medea* murders her children; *Clytemnestra* her husband, *Orestes* his mother; *Phædra* woos her step-son. I grant all that may be said as to differences of ancient manners and habits of thought; but these very same subjects have been readapted to the modern stage, adorned by the greatest geniuses of France, in an age when she especially prided herself on the purity of her drama, and the humanity of her audiences. They are enrolled amongst the masterpieces of *Racine*, *Corneille*, and *Voltaire*. They are incorporated with the drama of Italy. In England they furnish plots to the authors who were listened to as Reformers of the Stage from its ruder barbarities and grosser licence.

Turn to the titles in the earlier editions of Shakespeare's plays, and they even seem to invite attention by the promise of the crimes they are to depict. What are we to say of the—

"Tragedie of Kynge Richard, conteyninge his treacherous plots against his brother Clarence, and the murther of his innocent nephewes in the Tower; wyth the whole course of his detested life;" or of

"Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke, wyth his just revenge on the adulterous Kynge Claudius, and the poysoning of the Queen Gertrude."

Or, "The Tragedie of Macbeth, showing how, by treachery and manyfold murders, he obtained the crown of Scotland."

Or, "Othello the Moore of Venice, his deathe and strangling the fair Desdemona."*

I attach no weight to these titles themselves, of which Shakespeare is doubtless, innocent; but they certainly do not exaggerate the crimes which the plays depict. Crime, in fact, is the essential material of the Tragic Drama. Take crime from tragedy, and you annihilate tragedy itself. Whatever aims at the tragic effect, whether on the stage or in more sober narrative, cannot dispense with the evil which works to mischief—excites to terror—involves the innocent in its own ruin, and conduces to the tragic passions of our pity and our awe.† You may say at once, and literally of nearly all tragic writers "that they have sought in crimes their materials, and in criminals their heroes."

Mr. Burke has probably in much accounted for this sombre selection

* To say nothing of "Titus Andronicus," which is, probably, not Shakespeare's, or his only in part, but which we admit into our collections with no fear of demoralising weak minds, or poisoning the purity of youth by the successions of crimes and atrocities, murders, rapes—amputating hands, plucking forth tongues, hewing off heads—stabbing with a joke of "Weke, weke, so cries a pig"—cutting throats on the stage, while Lavinia between her stumps holds a bason for the blood, serving up to a mother her children baked in a pie, &c. &c. Why is not this play (no matter whose it be) to be banished from our collections? Because, here, time has brought healthful discernment; because, whatever the defective art which introduces such gratuitous horrors in "Titus Andronicus," every one knows that they do not *contaminate* the moral sense; the image of crime, made execrable, may pain and revolt us, but *for that very reason*, it does not allure or corrupt.

† Nothing can be more unsatisfactory than all definitions which have sought to limit the author's liberty of selection from criminal agencies and instruments. "The only circumstance," says one critic, "which elevates the crime into a subject for the poet or the dramatist, is the influence under which it is committed, the object which it is to attain, the nature of the impelling necessities which lead to it,—when these spring from causes not base or ignoble in themselves, when they come, for instance, from a combination of wrong not otherwise to be redressed, murder becomes a poetic subject; it is that which is dignified as a 'tragedy' and distinguished from mere felony." Words, signifying nothing! The crimes of Iago are base and ignoble in themselves—they come from "no combination of wrong not otherwise to be redressed;" neither, do those of Richard III., nor those of Phædra, of Clytemnestra, of the daughters of Lear and the mother of Hamlet, and the wife of Macbeth.

of character and subject, in those remarks, not the least subtle and profound, in his memorable treatise, wherein he demonstrates that, as power is a source of the sublime, so power to be sublime, must be suggestive of terror, and associated with attributes of destruction.

"Whatever," he says, "is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain or danger—that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime."*

Again, "that power derives all its sublimity from the terror with which it is generally accompanied, will appear evidently, from its effect in the very few cases in which it may be possible to strip a considerable degree of strength of its power to hurt,—when you do this, you spoil it of everything sublime, and it immediately becomes contemptible." He proceeds to compare the ox, strong but innocent, and therefore the idea of which is not grand, with the bull, which, precisely because its strength is often destructive, has frequently a place in sublime description. "We have continually about us animals of a strength that is considerable, but not pernicious; amongst these we never look for the sublime. It comes upon us in the gloomy forest and in the howling wilderness—in the forms of the lion, the tiger, the panther, or rhinoceros."†

Without absolutely going to the extreme of the principle this eminent thinker has enforced, or asserting that strength, to be sublime, must be *necessarily* pernicious; it is undeniable at least, that the association of power with destruction is one of the most obvious sources of the sublime. And, as guilt in Man, when accompanied with intellect or daring, contains a power infinitely exceeding the brute force of the mere animal, so crime is the customary material for tragic art, and furnishes the tremendous instrument for moving the human heart by the agency of terror.

Other reasons might be adduced to show why crime has been made an essential element on the stage;—how it has afforded to the master of human nature his amplest scope for investigating the most subtle and hidden recesses of character and passion, unravelling the skein of intellectual error, and holding up to a thoughtless world those striking and solemn warnings in which the more direct morality of tragic composition may be said to consist. Perhaps the old Greek Platonist who

* Burke on the "Sublime and Beautiful," Part I. sect. vii.

† *Ib.* Part II. sect. v.

eloquently defended Homer from the accusations of his master, has made some remarks on this part of our subject not unworthy of attention.

"It appears to me," he says, "that whatever is tragical, monstrous, and out of the common course of nature in poetical fictions, excites the hearers in all imaginable ways to the investigation of the truth, attracts us to recondite knowledge, and does not suffer us through apparent probability to rest satisfied with superficial conceptions, but compels us to penetrate into the interior parts of fables, to explore the obscure intention of their authors," &c.*

Enough, then, has been said to show that crime is an admitted and necessary element of tragic fiction, an agency employed by the greatest poets, and to be vindicated by the plainest principles of their art; and so popularly is this understood, that *the very statue of the Tragic Muse is represented with the dagger in one hand, the poison bowl in the other.*

But then it is implied, if not openly contended, that, though the presentation of crime is allowable on the stage, it is to be condemned in a novel. Much is said about the "weak minds of circulating library readers"—"the young" and "impressionable," &c. As if there were no weak minds in the pit and the gallery of Drury-lane—as if only sages and stoics were to be found in the boxes—as if a dramatic audience were not, upon the whole, a far more miscellaneous class than that of subscribers to a circulating library, comprehending far lower degrees of instruction, and a more general admixture, both of rank and of age†—as if, too, after all, literature were a kind of medicated farina, to be adapted with the daintiest nicety to the digestion of the weakly and diseased—as if any man of education and vigour, no matter whether he write a novel or a history, must not take it for granted, that he addresses readers of ordinary understanding and healthful comprehension! Is there, in fact, a book in the world that could ever have established a fame, if it had not mainly addressed itself to strong heads and clear intellects?

* Taylor's translation of Proclus in the "Apology for the Fables of Homer." I prefer adopting his translation, though not so forcible as I could wish, to any attempt of my own. I have taken, however, the liberty of substituting for the word "unnatural," the paraphrase, "Out of the common course of nature," which is certainly the true meaning of Proclus.

† These poor circulating library readers are a little too superciliously treated. Say what we like about them, they still form the ordinary mass of the reading public, and comprehend all its varieties of intellect and instruction. They certainly cannot be said to exclude the refined and scholastic few, while they as certainly do not embrace the lowest orders in mental cultivation.

Much, too, is said of the example of former novelists, who were contented with exhibiting manners, and ridiculing folly—as if all prose fiction were to be narrowed into a single classification, or as if all grave purpose and tragic end were forbidden to the compositions of fiction, because they are divided into chapters, not compressed into acts! What is the fair source of terror in one composition may be as readily resorted to in another. What is free to the imagination, if put into five acts, does not become reprehensible, if employed in three volumes. Each, the narrative or the drama, is bound but by its own peculiar modes of relation or expression. And since, whatever our varieties of appeal to the passions, all are traceable to springs in the human mind, to which all who treat of the passions must apply—the narrator is not only privileged, but absolutely *constrained* to come to the same sources as the writer for the stage. Pause to consider how moral terror in tragic composition is obtained. The more you examine, the more you will find that moral* terror is never excited except by images of evil or punishment—by some destroying or dangerous agency. Look a little deeper, and you will find that there are only two kinds of this agency—the first, supernatural, such as Fate, a ghost, a witch, a fiend, an oracle, &c., in which the images from another world are summoned to exercise evil influence over this; the second agency is human crime. Search, I say, all tragedies, all fictions, and you will find that moral terror is never produced, but by some evil or destroying power, and that that power is never to be found, except in the two agencies I have named—viz., the supernatural or the criminal. Grant, then, what you cannot deny, that the narrator is in the exercise of his undoubted right, to attempt, if he can, to create the passion of terror, and you are compelled to grant him the only means by which he can effect his object—viz., the supernatural or the criminal. This is so evident a truth, that it would be unnecessary to say a word further on the subject, if it were not that the public are less familiarised to representations of guilt in the narrative fiction, than they are in the dramatic; and hence the comparative unfamiliarity has given a readier reception to shallow criticism of the romance, than common sense and daily custom would permit to be applied to the drama. But this only proves what is undeniable—viz., that the tragic prose romance is of very recent date in literature, and has hitherto been sparingly cultivated. I believe that Richardson's

* I say moral terror, though even the physical terror caused by representations of bodily pain and danger can scarcely be artistically produced, without tracing it to moral evil, either in those who endure, or those who inflict it.

"*Clarissa Harlowe*" was the first prose fiction, attaining permanent celebrity, that resorted for interest to the elements of tragedy. I need not say, that the plot of that work is founded on the progress and perpetration of a crime equally odious and base, conducted through scenes, abetted by characters, and consummated by means which the public would probably not permit to a writer in the present day. Yet, of Richardson, our great moralist could say with truth "that he taught the passions to move at the command of Virtue." The next tragic fiction that won fame from the public, was the "*Julia de Roubigné*" of the gentle-hearted Mackenzie. It closes in murder and suicide; and those who would fly at higher game than the living, may find, perhaps, something to say against the dead great author, who holds up as the ideal of chivalrous honour—high, though erring—the jealous assassin, who poisons his wife, and escapes by self-slaughter the penalties and shame of his deed. Yet who, amongst the true judges of literature, would deny to Mackenzie the praise he deserves as a writer of the purest intentions, and the mildest humanity? Not long after this, with some tragic purpose (though I do not include it amongst the fictions that we recognise as critically tragic), came the "*Zeluco*" of Moore—the gloomy portrait of a hero whom no moral sentiment ennobles, no genial impulse ever warms—but justifying the author by his aim to show in the maturer life of his hero the errors of early education, and the absorbing debasement of cultivated egotism. Nor has any man ventured to deny, that Dr. Moore in his writings has deserved the reputation for virtuous purpose, which, more than his genius, obtained him the favour of the public.

To these succeeded the truly tragic fiction of Godwin's "*Caleb Williams*," in which, as in "*Julia de Roubigné*," a murderer is made the hero, with false honour for his tempter, while his remorse and his terror supply both analysis and incident. Yet, whatever may be said of Mr. Godwin's speculative opinions, on political and other subjects, all will admit that his aims were those of a philosopher, who sought, in his own way, the inculcation of morals. And while his more erroneous expositions of doctrine have sunk into oblivion, "*Caleb Williams*" lives yet, and will, perhaps, live while our language lasts, as a monument of genius, on which are graven admonitions to error.

Thus it will be perceived, that in *all* the classic tragic prose fictions preceding our own age, criminals have afforded the prominent characters, and crime the essential material.

Since the production of those works, prose fiction has yet more

extended its ancient limits.* It has entered with Goethe the domains of speculative thought; it has been enlarged to almost boundless extent by the energies of Scott. But while that last-named and illustrious writer enriched the realms he had won with the stores of the historian, and from the mines of the poet—while, in mere form, more than any one, he relieved and animated the progress of narrative, and the delineation of character with the dialogue and action of the stage, of tragic fiction, rigidly so called, he has left but one signal masterpiece, "*The Bride of Lammermoor*."† In this, to create his effects of awe, though human evil is unquestionably introduced, he rather resorted to the old Greek instrumentality of *fate*—a means which (for an obvious reason that I shall state hereafter) he could not have continued to employ if he had more generally directed his genius to tragic compositions. But, though the "*Bride of Lammermoor*" suffices to show that Scott's power in the sterner narrative surpassed all before him and since, the more habitual tendencies of his mind did not lead his choice to the regions over which awe and terror preside,

"Di quibus imperium est animarum umbræque silentes
Et Chaos et Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia late;"

still to the adventurer whom those regions invite, it is permitted to add—

"Sit mihi fas audita loqui: sit, numine vestro,
Pandere res altæ terræ et caligine mersas."

The tragic fiction is conceived—it has taken growth—it may be destined, amidst the comparative neglect of the stage, to supply the lessons which the tragic drama has, for awhile, abandoned. Do not fetter its wanderings from free search after truth through the mazes of society, and amidst all the contrasts of nature. If it is to be a voice to the heart, an interpreter of the secrets of life,—you cannot withhold from it the broadest experience of the struggle between good and evil, happiness and woe.

"Hunc igitur terrorem animi, tenebrasque necesse est."

* Thus, indeed, a class of composition has arisen, for which as yet we have no definite name; it corresponds not with our associations of the novel, nor yet with those of the romance. It does not belong precisely to either. We cannot justly call "*Wilhelm Meister*," or "*Anastasius*," "*Undine*" or "*Picciola*," "*Atala*" or "*Rencé*," "*Caleb Williams*" and "*Julia de Roubigné*," either novels or romances. In England the word *fiction* has thus crept into use, for want of one less general and vague.

† Unless we admit, as perhaps we ought, the more mixed and less gloomy romance of "*Kenilworth*," in which I need not say, that all which is effected of terror is produced by the agency of guilt; in fact, wherever Walter Scott has produced terror without employing *supernatural* means, it will always and unavoidably, from the causes stated in the text, be found in connection with crime.

But I am told, somewhat more definitely and precisely, that though crimes of a lofty order, rendered high and solemn by ancient tradition, and clad in the pomp of history, are fitting subjects for fiction, the crimes which occur in our own day and finish their career at the gallows or the hulks, are wholly to be banished from recital. "Such things may be : leave them to their own ignominy. Why elevate vulgar felons into heroes, and take us for interest to the Old Bailey ?"

This, I believe, is a correct quotation from the kind of censure with which (stripped of its grosser personalities) I have had to contend. Once for all, I will seek to answer it as seriously as if it were an argument, not a declamation ; a friendly remonstrance, not a hostile and heated assault. And while replying to my assailants in the Press, I address calmly and respectfully my argument to those on whom attacks so frequently and passionately urged may have produced an impression which it pains me most deeply to think any work of mine should create on one honourable and impartial mind.

I have already, I trust, shown that the charge of *habitually* selecting criminals for my themes is in itself untrue. I proceed now to the question, how far the crimes of our own days, the crimes of Tyburn and the Old Bailey, may be admissible to the licence of art in fiction, and conducive to the moral it should inculcate.

I will grant at once that for the purposes of poetry, high tragic effect may be more readily produced, and may usually create a grander or less distressful sentiment of awe, when it is sought in the ancient treasure-house of history or fable ; and in some of my works I have reverently drawn from such elder and remoter sources. But one region of art does not exclude the other. The past cannot monopolise the sorrows and crimes of ages. While we live, we ourselves become a past. And we are unquestionably warranted to consult the Book of Time, in the page which is spread before our eyes. Can we do so faithfully if we strike out all passages that pain or perplex us ? Can we give any fair idea of the record, if we confine all our extracts to what we instinctively approve and readily comprehend ? No, every one concedes to me at once, that a writer is at liberty to search amidst the materials afforded to him in modern life, for the subjects and characters of fiction. The comic writer takes fearlessly whatever in the errors and vices of mankind adapts itself to the comic result of exciting our ridicule, and moving our contempt :—

"Licet, semperque licebit
dicere de vitiis." *

* Hor. Sat. 4, lib. 1.

“It ever has, and ever will be, lawful to speak of the vices,” which it is the province of Comedy as of Satire to expose. The *Tartuffe* of Molière, the *Blifil* of Fielding, the *Squire Thornhill* of Goldsmith (a scoundrel, perhaps the vilest and the most sparingly punished in comic fiction), the whole spirit in Le Sage, the whole object in Swift, are uniformly directed to the exposure of the meaner and more vicious propensities of men. Folly and error, vice punished by ridicule, constitute the main materials of the comic writer, whether he employ them in a drama or a novel. Must we not grant to the writer who seeks for the elements of tragedy that exist in his own time, the equal licence to seek for the materials to which *tragedy* must apply? What are those materials but the passions and the crimes of men,—as, for comedy, the materials are drawn from the humours and the vices? Terror and compassion are the sources of the tragic writer’s effects; the destructive or pernicious power of intellect corrupted into guilt, affords him the natural means of creating terror for the evil, and compassion for its victims. To say that the criminals he is thus compelled to employ as the agents of his plot, are unfit for his purpose because they may be classed amongst the prey of Newgate and the Old Bailey, is but to lay down the preposterous principle, that we must not extract tragedy from times in which laws are carried into effect; it is simply to say, that, because men in our day are transported and hanged for guilt, the guilt of our day it is improper to analyse and depict. All crimes now, if detected, must obtain the notoriety of the Old Bailey, or reap their desert in Newgate; and to contend that Newgate and the Old Bailey unfit them for the uses of the writer of fiction, is virtually to deprive him of the use of all crimes punished by modern law and enacted in the modern day: as if there were no warning to be drawn from sins that are not ennobled by ermine and purple; as if there were no terror in the condemned cell, no tragedy at the foot of the gallows! And yet how hackneyed is the aphorism, that the human heart, and the tragedy to be drawn from it, remain the same in every age! Unless, then, we deny altogether that we are to seek for the sources of tragedy amidst the times which we must necessarily know the best, amongst the characters on which the broadest and steadiest light can be cast, amidst the warnings the most immediately useful to us, we cannot reject to the writer of modern fiction the materials of modern tragedy, even though they *are* drawn from the records of the prison-house, and the judgments of the law. The materials must be open to choice, with certain stipulations as to the treatment, into which we shall enter later.

It has long, indeed, been the opinion of many minds the most thoughtfully bent upon the alliance between humanity and art, that we have too much neglected the deeper and graver characteristics of our own age ; too much contented ourselves with surveys of the surface, delineations of manners, fashions, and foibles, and turned to the past for that sterner poetry which is not less sensibly to be found in the sorrows and the guilt of the life around us. Thus, towards the close of his life, Schiller, whom, at that time, no man can accuse of rash and unconsidered tamperings with the legitimate end of genius, meditated a drama that would seem least poetical to the shallow, but was intended to extract poetry from the very sources which it seems we are now forbidden to explore. His proposed subject was "The French Police;" and I need not say, that the conception could not fail to comprehend the evils, the abuses, and the crimes, of modern civilisation.

Good men there are, no doubt, who would interdict altogether the presentation of actual crime as painful and revolting—as administering to a passion for diseased excitement ; I respect their scruples. But, without here pausing to examine what weight can be attached to them. is the prohibition even possible ? Crime meets us as a fact everywhere ; you cannot open a newspaper, you cannot refer to statistics, you cannot mix in the ordinary world—but crime is forced daily and hourly on your notice. You must close up for purity and youth all history, sacred and profane : you must shut out from the calendar of life the tyrant and the martyr ; you must seal up the fountains of literature, and silence the long succession of poets from Sophocles to Dante, from Dante to Shakespeare, from Shakespeare to the last song that has thrilled through the world—if you seek to exclude from the mind the dark certainties of guilt. Even then you will fail. Man has but to live, to know that crime is the foe man must brave. Could you instruct him what he should resist and abhor, if you could leave him ignorant of its existence and its chastisement ? You cannot, like the Emperor of China, live in a fancied succession of triumphs and security, and receive congratulations on the felicity of your reign and the impregnability of your dominion, while the enemy are blockading your ports and sailing up your rivers. The essential characteristic of this age and land is *publicity*. There exists a Press which bares at once to the universal eye every example of guilt that comes before a legal tribunal. In these very newspapers which would forbid a romance writer to depict crime with all that he can suggest to demonstrate its causes, portray its hideousness, insist on its inevitable

doom,—are everywhere to be found the minutest details of guilt,—the meanest secrets of the prison-house are explored, turnkeys interrogated, and pages filled with descriptions of the personal appearance of the felon, his dress at the bar, his courage at the gallows. To find the true literature of Newgate and Tyburn, you have only to open the newspaper on your table. That reports *thus* sent abroad to all quarters of a motley civilisation, read aloud in the lowest alehouse, and in the vilest resorts of outcasts and thieves—the only literary food (as newspapers are) of the most uneducated classes;—that *such* may do harm, I am ready to confess, and this from the careless tone and the base detail—the obtrusion of a criminal notoriety unaccompanied by a single lesson—gorging the curiosity and familiarising away the solemnity of guilt.* But how different this from the narrative of a writer of fiction, who presents no *single* portraiture of crime to monopolise the morbid fancy—who contrasts it with images of purity and innocence, who analyses the workings of the heart, and thus checks its progress to corruption—who accompanies the crime, as by its shadow, with the darkness of its own deformity—who exerts all the power he possesses to accumulate terrors round its consequences and chastisements—whose work by its literary treatment (if the author possess but ordinary scholarship), to say nothing of its mode of publication, is not destined to penetrate, like the newspaper, amongst the most ignorant and perverted—the accomplices and imitators of the guilty—but is almost necessarily confined to classes of a certain education, which would render the imitation as untempting as the guilt itself is abhorrent. The fiction supplies the very lessons the newspaper cannot give. If the reader doubt this, let him only compare the impressions made upon his mind by a crime brought before the courts of law with those produced by a crime which some imaginative writer has depicted;—I am greatly mistaken if he does not own, at once, that the last are infinitely more grave, more forcible, and more enduring.

Analysis of the darker or coarser crimes of society is not intended to reform the criminals—they it does not reach. It is not as a curb to tyrants that “*William Tell*” is effective. It is not to reform an Appius that we express our sympathy with Virginus. It is not to breathe virtue into burglars that “*Jonathan Wild*” was composed, or

* This is the necessity of the newspaper press, rather than a reproach to it. That press but obeys the imperious demands for publicity which the age enforces. Its business is to deal with facts; and it can only partially and briefly convey the deductions which the author of a fiction writes volumes to explain.

to prevent men from poisoning their wives, that Mackenzie wrote his "*Julia de Rouvigné*." Limited, indeed, would be the moral uses of fiction, if confined to the peculiar idiosyncrasies of character it selects. Nor is it only by the catastrophe itself that fiction reaches the heart, but yet more by the mental dissection which it admits, that it corrects our errors, in developing their causes. It is by the tendencies to which terror or compassion in the tragic form, ridicule and contempt in the comic, are the agents, that we confirm social enthusiasm for virtue, and unite the reason with the passions in detestation of crime. And all this can be equally effected, whether we resort for materials to the past or to the present, to the vices of the great or to those of the mean. It is the treatment that ennobles, not the subject. Grant that the characters are what convention calls *low*—in birth, station, instruction; born in a cellar, dying on the gibbet, they are not one jot, for those reasons, made *necessarily* low to art. Art can, with Fielding, weave an epic from adventures with gamekeepers and barbers. Art can, with Goethe, convert into poetry the most lofty, the homely image of the girl condemned for infanticide, and confine the vast war between spirits and men, to the floors of her felon cell. Rightly has the most majestic of poets placed at the Portals of Dread, not those fiends which are the tempters of the great and deluders of the wise, but rather the demons of the ruder multitude, "Fear, and ill-advising Hunger, Labour, and shameful Want"—

"Et Metus, et malesuada Fames et turpis Egestas;
Terribiles visu formæ—Letumque, Laborque." *

To sum up, I think, then, we must allow—

1st. That crime, however great and heinous, is an admitted and necessary agency in tragic fiction, warranted by the employment of the greatest masters, and the sanction of all ages.

2ndly. That it is equally admissible in the narrative fiction as the dramatic.

3rdly. That we may seek for the materials of terror in crime, or *destructive power*, amidst the present as the past—that we are limited neither to particular periods, nor conventional gradations of rank—that wherever we find the facts that furnish the passion of terror,† and the characters that permit the analysis of motive to conduct, (the cause to the effect)—we are at full liberty to use them.

• Virg. *Æn.* vi. 276, 277.

† I should apologise for the fatiguing repetition of the word *terror* throughout this inquiry. But I could not avoid it without obscurity and circumlocution. I must make the same excuse for the repetition of the word *art*.

I said that we have a right to demand certain stipulations as to treatment and selection.

1stly. We have a right to demand that, whatever interest the author bids us take in the criminal, we should never, by any metaphysical sophistry, be seduced into admiration of the crime—that even where, as usually in the drama, the criminal is invested with attributes that enforce respect, or is induced to an offence at war with his general character by circumstance and temptation—still the crime itself should be shown clearly as a violation of eternal laws, and be condemned, not only by the result in the fiction, but the reason of the beholder. We are not forbidden to sympathise with Othello in his jealousy, nor to admire the nobleness which contrasts an infirmity ordinarily mean and egotistical; for we see that the crime to which it urges him entails its own direful punishment, and no compassion for the murderer lessens our horror of the murder.

2ndly. The crimes depicted should not be of a nature to lead us through licentious scenes, nor accompanied with descriptions that appeal dangerously to the senses. There is one class of evil which shocks and revolts us—there is another class of evil to which the most perilous ally is in our own nature. There is nothing to corrupt us in the delineation of murder and violent wrong; our instincts recoil at once from the idea of imitation. There may be much to corrupt us in the delineation of an adulterous love, though the moral it is meant to convey may, in itself, be excellent. And, therefore, it is safest not to make prominent or minutely to detail crimes of a nature which less openly revolts us than insidiously allures.*

3rdly. In dealing especially with the coarser and more violent crimes least idealised by remote tradition, least dignified by history above vulgar associations, the author is bound to have some object in view, belonging to the purer and more thoughtful principles of art, to which the means he employs are subordinate and conducive. If in "*Jonathan Wild*," Fielding takes us almost solely among thieves and pickpockets, it is not merely, and objectively, as it were, to familiarise us with their principles and habits. In describing the actual meanness, he is aiming his satire at false greatness. It is not because a man is a felon and a criminal that *therefore* he furnishes a fitting theme for the drama

* And this principle of treatment, be it observed, holds as good in the delineation of virtue as in the exhibition of guilt. "*Pamela*," for instance, is intended to celebrate the triumph of virtue in a woman,—"*Caleb Williams*" depicts the guilty fall of a man. Yet which of the two fictions would a father prefer to trust to his children? The design of Richardson is eminently virtuous, but, by an error in art, the treatment intrudes scenes and suggests ideas of very questionable safety.

or the narrative. I guard myself especially against appearing to sanction so preposterous a conclusion. But if there be anything so peculiar in his guilt, or the circumstances attending it, as to afford fair scope for artistic purpose, suggest useful reflections, or inculcate a salutary lesson, —then it is, not because he is a criminal or felon, that he becomes an unfit instrument for those ends to which, indeed (as we have seen), the agency of crime is essential. If, therefore, the author make use of the actual and more violent guilt that forms one element of the society around us—we have a right to expect that it will be introduced, not in wanton levity, but for some thoughtful purpose—tending (to the best of his judgment) to illustrate some serviceable truth.

These, I believe, are the main restrictions which we must impose upon the liberty of the author, in granting him all the privileged resources of his art.

I venture to assert, that by these restrictions I have been bound. Throwing myself on the indulgence of the candid for an egotism, rendered necessary by the direct personality of the attacks, and without which the reader must be sensible that these remarks would be desultory and incomplete; and assuming merely, that the three works I am called upon to defend have been read by those to whom I address myself, I proceed to challenge for them the severest application the impartial can bestow, of the rules I have laid down for the proprieties of treatment.

And first, as to "*Paul Clifford*."* The object of "*Paul Clifford*" ought to be sufficiently apparent. It was written at a time when capital punishment was still in this country indiscriminately impolitic and severe—when society was not employed, as it is virtuously now, in seeking to reform the circumstances which engender crime in the masses; but was content with punishing by severity the offences it had in much caused by neglect. To quote from the short preface to the edition of 1840, it was my design, therefore, "to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions—viz., a vicious prison discipline, and a sanguinary criminal code—the habit of first corrupting the boy by the very punishment that ought to redeem him, and then hanging the man on the first occasion, as the easiest way of getting rid of our own blunders;" it was "a satire on the short cut established between the house of correction and the condemned cell."

Paul Clifford himself is thus represented as one of the very numerous class to which all practical philanthropists are now inviting our atten-

* The real hero of this book is perhaps rather William Brandon than his son; but I take the responsibility created by the title selected.

tion ; exposed in boyhood to the contagion of evil companionship—sent to prison for an offence he does not commit—escaping from it by the dexterity of one of those confirmed rogues, with whom a prison brings him into familiar association—and afterwards, almost necessarily driven for a livelihood into defiance of the Law, which had already expelled him from its pale. Paul Clifford offends, and he is punished—he is an exile for ever from his country ; but as his offence is extenuated by circumstances—as society in itself is in some measure a partaker of it—as some good qualities, that show him capable of reform, belong to his character, and as he has been led into none of the darker crimes of cruelty, revenge, and bloodshed—so he is not punished to the extent of the gallows. He is allowed to work out his redemption by repentance and atonement. In all this, the Novelist does but second the improved disposition of Society itself. He does but advocate in a fiction the principles which are now enlightening our journals and ameliorating our laws.

To guard against danger of imitation by the modern invaders of property (if such a book could ever reach them), Paul Clifford is not represented—as certain parties choose unblushingly to assert—as a mere pickpocket and thief—he is taken out of the range of existing subjects for the Old Bailey. His offence is that of the obsolete, and now impossible nature, which characterised what was satirically called the “Gentleman Highwayman ;” and has passed away from our well-regulated roads and enclosed commons as entirely as the band of Robin Hood has passed from the glades of Sherwood. It can now be imitated no more than adventurous youth can imitate the *Locksley* and the *Rob Roy* of Walter Scott. And with quite as much justice in the last-cited novel may its great and healthful author be accused of exalting a robber into a hero, and weaving round him a dangerous and immoral interest, as the humbler writer, now put upon his defence, of such a design in the moonlight rides of Paul Clifford, the Highwayman.* If exception be taken to the mere lowness of scenes and characters occasionally introduced in the book, but by no means forming the principal part of it, I may observe, that as they contain nothing obscene or licentious, nothing to incite or inflame, and are not

* Rob Roy defies the law, plunders the traveller, ravages the border, spares not life, if in his way, and is represented on the whole as an amiable and gallant character, and dismissed without punishment, to the doubtful approbation of the reader. In all this the assailers of “Paul Clifford” see nothing to call for the charge of raising robbers into heroes, or bestowing interest upon criminals. And they are right. Let them be but consistent. If this miserable jargon is to be employed at all, let them use it impartially.

introduced for themselves, but for satire upon the real vulgarity often found beneath the mere conventional polish they travesty or burlesque,—so whatever may be said against such an introduction on the score of art, it is free, at least, from all tendency to corrupt. And in this, since I cannot claim the merit of originality, I have at least the sanction of authorities the most respected—not only in the disputed morality of the “*Beggars’ Opera*,” or the nobler precedent of “*Jonathan Wild*”—but in the “*Beggar’s Bush*” of Beaumont and Fletcher, which does not disdain to put slang into verse—in the “*Guzman D’Alfarache*” of Le Sage—in the “*Sharper*” of Quevedo—and in the innumerable scenes in what is called “low life,” which are never cited in reproach of our greatest novelists.

I think, therefore, that I may fairly dismiss “*Paul Clifford*” to the acquittal of any impartial jury upon the capital charges that without evidence and against precedent, have been laid to its charge.

In “*Eugene Aram*” the case was wholly different, demanding graver treatment and more awful chastisement; here, at least, there was no vulgar offender, nor here was there any victim to the errors and neglect of society. Here was one of those startling phenomena in human conduct which had arrested the attention of the historian, claimed the muse of the Poet, which had been more than the nine days’ wonder in the age in which it had occurred, and remained in the record and memories of men, as containing the problems, and exciting the terror, of a completed tragedy in itself. The picture of a laborious and self-taught student, apparently of a life the most blameless, a character the most humane, locking within his conscience the secret of a dark and inexplicable crime, not to be explained by intelligible motives—attributed to what seemed essentially opposite to his nature and pursuits, (viz. the mean desire of gain)—brought to light after many years, by a series of circumstances, regular and coherent as the links in a Drama, is surely not to be classed amidst the vulgar and commonplace offences of Newgate records; and if ever crime be admissible in fiction, I confess that I know of few within that wide history in which it finds its place, more set apart and marked out for tragic analysis and delineation. Not in the various subjects it has been my fortune to select, though they have dealt with larger and more complicated interests of mankind; not in Pliny’s fearful account of the flaming mountain and buried city; not in the failing attempt of Rienzi to resuscitate the corpse of Roman grandeur, recorded in the annals of Italy; not in the wild and gloomy struggle in which our own Chroniclers have tracked, amidst the Wars of the Roses, the sanguinary transition from the feudal to the social age,

can I recognise a theme more adapted to Tragic purposes than the image of that solitary mind, silent and bowed down beneath the weight of its solitary crime. I was not singular in my belief that this subject was appropriate to the purposes to which I presumed to apply it. Mr. Godwin assured me that he had often meditated a fiction, of which Eugene Aram was to be the hero; and I am informed by a high and indisputable authority,* that Sir Walter Scott expressed his surprise that a crime so peculiarly adapted to tragedy or romance, had been so long untreated by either.

I venture, then, to assume that the choice of my subject was sufficiently legitimate. And I addressed myself to its execution with an earnest study neither to palliate the offence, nor diminish the terror of the chastisement. Here, unlike the milder guilt of Paul Clifford, the author was not to imply reform to society, nor open in this world atonement and pardon to the criminal. As it would have been wholly in vain to disguise, by mean tamperings with art and truth, the ordinary habits of life and attributes of character, which all record and remembrance ascribed to Eugene Aram, as it would have defeated every end of the moral inculcated by his guilt, to portray in the caricature of the murderer of melodrama, a man immersed in study, of whom it was noted that he turned aside from the worm in his path,† so I have allowed to him whatever contrasts with his inextinguishable crime have been recorded on sufficient authority. But I have invariably taken care that the crime itself should stand stripped of every sophistry, and be hideous to the perpetrator as well as to the world. Allowing all by which attention to his biography may explain the tremendous paradox of fearful guilt in a man aspiring after knowledge and not generally inhumane—allowing that the crime came upon him in the partial insanity, produced by the combining circumstances of a brain overwrought by intense study, disturbed by an excited imagination, and the fumes of a momentary disease of the reasoning faculty, consumed by the desire of knowledge, unwholesome and morbid, because coveted as an end, not a means, added to the other physical causes of mental aberration—to be found in loneliness, and want verging upon famine;—all these which a biographer may suppose to have conspired to his crime, have never been used by the novelist as excuses for its enormity, nor indeed, lest they should *seem as* excuses, have they ever been clearly presented

* Our distinguished diplomatist, Sir Hamilton Seymour.

† The Rev. Mr. Hinton said "he used frequently to observe Aram, when walking in the garden, stoop down to remove a snail or a worm from the path."

to the view. The moral consisted in showing more than the mere legal punishment at the close. It was to show how the consciousness of the deed was to exclude whatever humanity of character preceded and belied it from all active exercise—all social confidence; how the knowledge of the bar between the minds of others and his own, deprived the criminal of all motive to ambition, and blighted knowledge of all fruit: Miserable in his affections, barren in his intellect—clinging to solitude, yet accursed in it—dreading as a danger the fame he had once coveted—obscure in spite of learning, hopeless in spite of love, fruitless and joyless in his life, calamitous and shameful in his end;—surely such is no palliative of crime, no dalliance and toying with the grimness of evil! And surely, to any ordinary comprehension, any candid mind, such is the moral conveyed by the fiction of “Eugene Aram!”

I come now to the last of the three works of which I have undertaken the defence. But before I speak of the object really intended in the romance of “*Lucretia*,” I must clear up a very signal and general mistake on the part of my critics. In the preface to “*Lucretia*,” it will be observed that I speak much of an intention I had long entertained of depicting the influences of money upon modern civilisation, and exposing what I held as a vice of the day, in impatience or dislike to the slow returns of legitimate toil, whether in pecuniary speculation or intellectual ambition. And upon this, with the exception of two or three reviewers, there has been an outcry of simultaneous discovery that the design announced in the preface was not borne out in the execution of the book; and accordingly that the book was a failure, because the author had not accurately defined what the book was intended to convey. If these gentlemen will do me the favour to correct in themselves that ‘impatience’ which I took the liberty to denounce, and look with a little less haste at that unfortunate preface, they will, perhaps, convince themselves that I never professed “*Lucretia*” to be the fulfilment or carrying out of the purpose which I said I had once meditated in an *earlier* design. What I stated, I thought with sufficient distinctness, was, that when I half implied my farewell to the character of a novelist, I had imagined that an attempt to illustrate the influences of money might be best worked out upon the stage; that that design, with which I wished to couple some exposition of the popular vice of impatience, I afterwards thought I could best treat in a novel; but that while meditating such a conception, I became acquainted with the lives of two criminals, so remarkable as to engage my examination and analysis; and, that this *second* design

had supplanted the first, I thought I had made abundantly clear by the following remarks :—

“I could not resist the temptation of reducing to a tale the materials (viz., the lives and letters of the said two criminals) which had so engrossed my interest and tasked my inquiries ; and, in this attempt, various *incidental* opportunities have occurred, if not of completely carrying out, still of incidentally illustrating my *earlier* design.” And, a few lines farther, I expressly observe, “that the delineation of the darker crime formed the *staple* of my narrative,” proceeding to remark, that in that delineation “the less obvious moral must be found in those uses to which poets have applied the portraiture of gigantic crime.”

Therefore, any impartial person will perceive at once, that even at the commencement of my book its object has been, to say the least, carelessly misrepresented ;—that what made the purpose of an earlier and suspended design, only furnished incidental illustration to the present—and that that illustration was the less noticeable in the agencies of the greater crime which formed the staple of the narrative, and in which another moral must necessarily be sought.

“The incidental opportunities” to which I limited my engagement, occur chiefly in the minor agents of the fiction. William Mainwaring with a competent fortune, and abilities calculated, with steady perseverance, to gratify ambition by an honourable repute, finds his tempter in the undue desire of gain, and the rash impatience for distinction. Without these enemies in his own breast, Lucretia had been powerless against him. On the other hand, Walter Ardworth, represented as honest in his impulse and generous in his sympathies, loses character for want of due regard to the prudence in preserving, which is the counter error to greed in acquiring ; and too impatient, even in the social and generous tendencies which attach him to liberty as the advancement of his species—to study the application of theory to practice, sinks into a shallow declaimer, as useless to his cause, as unprofitable to himself. In contrast to both these, meant to unite the talents of the one with the sympathies of the other, is sketched in outline the character of John Ardworth—energetic but not rash—uncovetous, but self-denying—valuing money at its just standard, and looking to steadfast labour as the surest means of success. Incidentally (if only incidentally) the secret and sinister influences of money upon conduct, are also suggested in the mechanical avarice of Beck—the habitual degradation of Grabman—*incidentally* they even apply to the career of the two arch criminals themselves—covetousness and

impatience are twin elements in the grasping, hollow, character of the scoundrel, Varney, "alieni appetens, sui profusus," with the cold heart of the miser—the rank lusts of the spendthrift. Impatience to attain to the end, which her selfish love for Mainwaring suggests, is the first cause of those criminal desires in Lucretia, which are the germs of her criminal deeds, and by which she first permits herself to encourage the contemplation of a human life as an obstacle in her way. And with all her constitutional indifference to money in itself, so much is money mixed up with men's fellest, as their noblest designs, that it is for the coveted inheritance of her son, for the power money can bestow, that her crowning and most hideous guilt is principally conceived and accomplished. If it be said that these are not the patent and obvious influences of money, I reply that, even in my earlier design, such indirect influences were not those which I stated it to be my intention to depict. The broad characteristics, whether of a *Hurpagon*, a *Beverley* or an *Heir of Lynn*, have been sufficiently portrayed. I spoke emphatically of a former design to trace rather "the *strange and secret* ways in which that arch civiliser, familiarly called money, insinuates itself into our thoughts and motives, our hearts and actions." But all I professed in *this* work, was to take advantage of incidental opportunities of suggesting such lessons—and I have now shown, that I have fulfilled my intention to the extent of my engagement.

The deeper, sterner, and more tragical design to be found in the crimes that form the staple of the narrative, I did not detail in my preface, partly because I trusted it might be sufficiently obvious to the more intelligent reader, partly because it could not have been explained without impertinently forestalling the plot, and could not well have been understood till the volumes were closed, and the mind could look back upon the whole. I was mistaken, it seems, in my first reason for silence, and I have no longer the motive for the second. Here let me pause for a moment, and endeavour to remove from the mind of the reader the principal obstacle, I apprehend, in the way of his candid judgment.

Colley Cibber tells us in his amusing autobiography, that in his time actors did not like to represent the parts of villains, "lest in some sort they should be confounded with the persons represented," and, indeed, that the audience themselves "were shy of giving applause to Iago, lest they should be looked on as abettors of the wickedness in view." Nay, "the Master of the Revels, who then licensed plays for the stage, would strike out whole scenes, where a vicious and immoral character was introduced, however visibly it

were shown that it was to be afterwards punished or reformed." Once, much to poor Colley's dismay, this wise Master of the Revels struck out the whole of the first act of Richard III., "without leaving a line of it." In vain was the prayer, "for a speech or two, that the other four acts might limp on with a little less absurdity." The Master of the Revels was obdurate, "and so the play was positively acted for some years without the first act at all!"

Now something, perhaps, of this prejudice still exists in the public; when the author has presented some character of villainy to their eyes, perhaps they are still shy of their applause, "lest they be looked upon as abettors of the wickedness described." Nay, perhaps the more life-like and truthful the villainy, the greater the dread of being entrapped into owning the faithful colours of the author, and the easier, by some artful foe in the house, they may be led into venting on the writer some part of the resentment which he designedly raised against his creations. This is like beheading Dr. Guillotine by the very machine he intended, out of the least truculent motives, for the more artistic decapitation of felons. I must entreat, however, the reader to lay aside that prejudice which, however amiable, is certainly unjust, and dissociate entirely the idea of what is due to the author, from the sense of what is due to the characters whom the author has purposely submitted to abhorrence. He does not the less hate the crimes, because he has sought, in presenting, to deduce from them what warnings they may convey: and he is about now more clearly to explain what moral, perhaps not unprofitable, may come, clear and fair, from the guilt it has shocked the good to behold.

When the chief materials for the gloomier part of this tale were submitted to me, in the lives, writings, and correspondence of the two persons represented under the names of Lucretia and Varney, that which made upon me the deepest and most startling impression was the degree of intellectual cultivation which accompanied and heightened their ineffable guilt. We are so accustomed to consider crime the hideous offspring of ignorance, that when we find it accompanied by much literary instruction, it startles the wonder of the indifferent, and rouses the inquiry of those who love to explore the workings of the human mind.

The person whose guilt is certainly not exaggerated in Varney, was an artist, a musician, a critic, and a writer of liveliness and versatility. In his correspondence, he appears to have skimmed the surface of a large and various reading—speaks familiarly of Kant, and hints at a translation of Schelling. In the correspondence of the original from

whom is drawn the Lucretia of the fiction, are apparent a cultivation more elaborate, and faculties more formidable. These were facts not to be got over. Some lesson, like all facts, they must convey. And I searched for that lesson as a physician may watch some fearful disease, so rare indeed in itself, that his deductions might never be applied to one precisely similar, but which, if comprehended and detailed, might add to the general stores of pathology, and unravel some of the more mysterious complications of the human frame. It is ever painful to believe in the union of mental cultivation with cruel propensities or moral depravity; still, the fact of such a union rises out from every page in the varying chronicles of history. Sometimes the most ruthless exterminator is found in one who has armed himself against his kind, with all the learning of his age; and the accomplishments of a woman have been interwoven with the ferocities of a savage. The most sanguinary tyrant of ancient Greece so cultivated the reasoning faculties he perverted, as to induce the popular error to class him amongst the sages: Nero had stored his cruel and sensual mind with the very accomplishments supposed most to humanise and soften; everything that his time could teach him, refined into system the atrocities of Cæsar Borgia; Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, surpassed the most ruthless in an age of barbarity; yet "with his head," say the chroniclers, "fell half the scholarship of England;" Richard the Third brought to the fierce, unlettered struggles of his day the arts of Italy and the learning of Utrecht. Happily, the moral to be drawn from these colossal criminals is, the utter failure of the very intellect so perverted and misused. And as, whatever our inclination to the contrary, we cannot deny that in private individuals the same discordant and dismal union of cultivated intellect and corrupted conscience does sometimes, though rarely, exist, let us deduce from biography and fiction the same salutary truth that consoles us in history. History makes clear the fact and loud the warning. Is it wrong for fiction, that history of the inner heart, to do the same? To show the nothingness and impotence of intellect, even in the attainment of its own intellectual aims, when it once admits crime as its agency—to show how useless, nay, pernicious, to the guilty possessor is the very mental power he thus desecrates and perverts—to show that goodness and genial affection are essential to the triumph and fruitfulness of all that mind may plot for, and force would command—for these lessons, it might be as permissible to dive into the guilt of Lucretia as into that of the Prince of Valentinois—and expose in the humbler villain of our own day the same attributes of character, the

same alliance of the sensual and the cruel, the effeminate and unsparing, which may startle us in the imperial poisoner and parricide of old. It is only "the property-man" of the stage that sees grandeur but in the crown or the toga. Strip off the externals. We have a right to compare men with men.

I wished, then, to show the fate of intelligence abused to the ends of guilt. Somewhat of this had already been shadowed out, as I have said, in the tale of "Eugene Aram." I sought now to follow the inquiry it suggested into wider tracks, and into yet more comprehensive results. With two out of the three great divisions of human intelligence, facts supplied me; I drew from invention for the third.

In Dalibard, the intention was to portray the wary, calculating, and laborious intellect, which, rightly directed, leads to science; in Varney, the versatile, lively, impressionable fancy, which, purified and guided, may conduct to art; in Lucretia, the energy and active will, which, nobly stimulated and trained, may lead to eminence and success in the outward concerns of life.

All these intellects had but to be honest to succeed. Each of these intellects divorces itself early from all interests but its own. Each works and plots solely for objects identified with itself. Each admits crime for its agency; and from that moment all three, so essentially distinct, are merged in one common infamy and degradation—from that moment, every effort of the intellect itself becomes a failure; and time and justice, and the truth of things, crush them beneath the Alps they themselves have created. In the minutiae of treatment, all ground for such mischief, as the most cautious might apprehend, in instructing depravity (if depravity such a book should ever reach,) as to the materials at its command, has been so studiously avoided, that the reader will perceive the uniform care with which the possible attainment of those materials have been placed out of the reach of the guilty; the temporary success that attends the poisons employed by the murderers is made to depend solely on their selection of no drug to be procured by common-place villany—in the secrets of chemical compounds, which at no shop could be purchased, of which no hint is conveyed, except that only by chemistry, the most erudite and skilful, they can possibly be combined. Rather than incur, however innocently, the possibility of supplying to one "morbid idiosyncrasy" the agencies at the service of these modern Borgias, I have willingly invited the much more plausible accusation of far-fetched and impracticable devices, if ever existing, wholly lost to the invention, wholly out of the command, of guilt in the age in which we live.

I said in my preface that the originals from whom I had drawn had as little as imagination can conceive to redeem their guilt. And this, I trust, I have sternly kept in view. I have never once held them up to compassion. I have left them that degree of ability which was justified by facts; not elevated into the genius, with which, as in history, we find such criminality is not accompanied. It has been even reproached to me, that I have not given them genius, and that all their cunning, instruction, or audacity avails them not for worldly success. Why, that was precisely one truth that I aimed at! The Borgias and the Richards fall short of genius, but have ability sufficient to have won them some distinction in good, and powerful only for destruction when applied to evil. I have never suffered ability so debased to pass into the command of admiration—I have shown how impotent it was to lessen one atom of our detestation, though sufficient, (if such art be in the writer,) to accompany detestation with terror. Pressed into the service of Death, Mind itself grows grim and hateful as the king that it serves.

"Black it stands as Night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shakes a deadly dart!"

These Children of Night, by the paths they themselves have chosen, are conducted to catastrophes, which, while punishing them the most in the sin each had most favoured, was that which each (could the soul have foreseen it) would have regarded as the most fearful and appalling. Dalibard, the coward and the calculator, shrinking from all physical danger, and using his holiest relationships but as tools to his purpose, is betrayed at the hearth he had desecrated, and butchered by the dull ruffian he had duped. Varney, who had prostituted the perfection of his physical senses to their vilest gratifications, luxurious amidst his infamy, effeminate in despite of his animal audacity, is sentenced to the coarsest of hardships, the vilest of labour, chained to the most loathsome of malefactors, doomed to all that the senses, most pampered, would shudder from the most, all that the fancy, so perverted, could body forth of horror and despair. Lucretia, who had made on earth no god but the intellect—is cursed in the intellect—smitten down below the brutes, but with the consciousness of the mortal—retaining, amidst the ruins of all the past, only the image of her crime, standing face to face with it, as a visible thing.—Surely these punishments are as appalling and as appropriate to the guilt as poetic justice can command! And beside them the gibbet is mercv and relieve.

The delineation, then, of these three arch criminals, was not the indulgence of any idle or morbid affection for the contemplation of guilt in itself, it was but undertaken for an honest and serious purpose. And a thoughtful reader will perceive, that even the more subordinate images of evil introduced, were in accordance with one earnest and elaborate design. The dull and villainous brutality of the grave-stealer, for instance, forms no superfluous figure on the gloomy canvas, nor, in chaining that sordid ruffian to the more pampered miscreant, is the idea of befitting punishment to the last, alone enforced. But in confounding in one lowest abyss of human degradation, the man in whom no nobler faculty has ever been awakened, and the man to whom all faculties sufficing for the perception of good have been given, and by whom they have been voluntarily perverted to odious and execrable ends, it was sought to convey a truth, suggestive of no unprofitable reflections.

That wise man, Dr. Slop, in discussing Yorick's Sermon, contends that the Roman-catholic Sermons "have greatly the advantage, that they never introduce any character below a patriarch, or a patriarch's wife, or a martyr, or a saint. 'There are some very bad characters in this, however,' said my father, 'and I do not think the sermon is a jot the worse for 'em.'"

Perhaps Mr. Shandy in this was a better judge than Dr. Slop.

I contend, then, and I think that I have proved, that the design of this book of the "Children of Night," was conformable to the laws of fiction and the truths of history; that the moral it enforces is serious and impressive; not the less for the pain it bequeaths; that it can but deepen the horror of guilt, and the dread of its consequences; that it can but preach wholesome lessons to the intellect, and awaken lively self-examination in the heart; and that there is not a single attempt to create for the criminals any interest save that of terror and suspense in their deeds,* or to pervert for one instant the channels of sympathy from their legitimate source.

I have been told, indeed, that, though these dark social phenomena may exist, they are too peculiar, too rare, for moral or artistical treatment. Perhaps, such critics would never have made the charge had they been aware of the compliment it implies. Every man really a critic in art, knows that rare truths are more important than frequent ones. "The teaching of Nature," says one who has thoroughly

* By a strange inconsistency, the very parties that reproached me for blending some redeeming good qualities with the offences of Paul Clifford and the crime of Eugene Aram, reproach me for the opposite fault of leaving the wickedness of Varney and ~~Isabella~~ utterly unredeemed.

mastered the subject he treats of, "is as varied and infinite as it is constant, and the duty of the painter is to watch for every one of her lessons, and to give (for human life can admit of nothing more) those in which she has manifested each of her principles in the most striking and peculiar way. The rarer his phenomena, the more valuable his works will be." Not, indeed, that we must delineate the rare alone. "Both the frequent and the rare are parts of the same great system; to give either exclusively is imperfect truth." If these "Children of Night" are happily rare deviations from the order established below, they do not occupy the whole of my canvas, and they are surrounded with images more bright, and I believe, more frequent. Is there nothing innocent in Helen? nothing frank and pure in the youth of Percy? nothing honest and upright in John Ardworth? nothing benevolent in Fielding? nothing amiable and genial in Sir Miles St. John? And as the general disposition and tendencies of an author are not to be judged by one work alone, so I may venture to invite those who have really read me, to add to the contrast of the gloom and guilt depicted in "*Lucretia*," whatever of gentler fancies they may remember in the "*Pilgrims of the Rhine*," or to attempt to symbolise the beauty of Art in the romance of "*Zanoni*," or to embody the steadfast virtue of practical life in the Mordaunt of "*The Disowned*." And if they will permit their thoughts to wander for a moment through the whole range of my writings, they will own at least that, whatever their faults, they are not to be accused of sameness in the characters, nor of monotony in treatment.

"*Lucretia*," I confess to be a painful book; all delineation of fearful crime, and the ruin it entails, must necessarily be so. If, in its treatment, I have overstepped the true limits of terror, that may be an error in *art*, but not one, (be it remembered and distinguished,) in *moral* tendency and design.*

There is this distinction between the old tragedy and the new. With the Greek, Fate was the main instrument of woe and crime;—so with the Greek, there was little need of mental analysis—little need to show from what errors of his own, man suffered and sinned. Fate stalked across his way or stood upon his hearth—his fell and irresistible foe. An oracle declared he should murder, a god led his steps to his doom. But, with us, guilt or woe has its source in ourselves. Our conscience is our oracle, our deeds shape our fate. And though, in

* In the present edition it will be seen that the author has endeavoured by an alteration in the catastrophe, to lighten the pain which the earlier cast of the work had produced.

a few rare instances, modern writers have still had recourse to the iron deity of old, it is obvious that unless the instrumentality of a power which we cannot influence and control be most sparingly and cautiously employed, we should seem to sanction the dangerous principle that we are the passive and unconscious tools, not the active and reasoning contrivers, of the evil that conducts us to the abyss. Hence arises the imperious necessity, for those who resort to the sources of tragedy, and trace from them the channels of woe or guilt—to search narrowly and patiently (often, it may be, with distaste to themselves) into all that is dark and hidden in the mechanism of the mind for the causes of evil, and the links between the thought and the sin. And thus in proportion to the crime they depict, and the destruction it effects, must be the gloom of the impression they create, and the degree of pain they inflict. If, in the narrative of these “Children of Night,”—if, as some assert, “its horror is burlesque,” and its treatment “excites rather ridicule than awe,”—if, as I am assured by others, it is “dulness upon dulness,” “nothing graphic in the pictures,” “nothing striking in the incidents,”—then, though its moral cannot be pernicious, I have certainly failed to render it instructive. But if it bequeaths (as the facts on which it is founded should enable it to do) the effect of tragedy thoroughly in earnest—a sensation of terror that oppresses the more from the conviction that reality lies beneath the fiction—a relief in the heartfelt detestation of the crime from which the terror proceeds—a dread of “the destructive power” which is the essence of the hateful combination between intellect and guilt, and a desire to rush for escape to the cheerful atmosphere of good,—then does this book come, at least, within the allotted limits of the art that is built upon terror, and sanctions its connexion with pain and distress,* and then does it attain to those moral effects which are produced by the means of the passions.

The moral conveyed in all works of the imagination, is in part distinct and immediate, in part also it is untraceable, distant and indirect. And this latter part is perhaps the most really valuable and

* In quoting the following passage, it is not with the presumption of advancing any claim to the high attainment of which mention is made, but simply to show that, in the judgment of a very eminent critic, art finds in *distress* one ingredient of the sublime; and though, of course, an effect is not sublime because it is distressing, yet at least it is not an offence to art that the sensation of distress is occasioned. Though a writer may make no pretence to the sublime, he may still apply for such effects as his degrees of power permits him to produce to whatever are suggested as its sources. “Of *feeling*, little more can be said, than that the idea of bodily pain in all the modes and degrees of labour, pain, anguish, torment, is productive of the sublime, and nothing else in this sense can produce it.”—“Its strongest emotion (that of the sublime,) is an emotion of distress, and no pleasure from a positive cause belongs to it.”—BURKE *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, part ii. sect. 29.

efficient. Ask any thoughtful and educated man, what works have produced the most marked and recognised influence on his conduct, and I believe he will never name a fiction or a poem. Next, and unspeakably subordinate, to the more sacred monitors whose counsel he reverently obeys—he will tell us, perhaps, of some homely treatise, or some artless biography. But ask that man to dissociate from the general influences on his conduct, whatever he may have learned from the pages of poetry and fiction, and he will doubtless tell you it is impossible. He will acknowledge how much, yet how insensibly, they have strengthened his moral impressions—how much they have suggested reflections that brighten his perceptions of truths—how much they have added to that general knowledge of the heart which has set emotion on its guard, and animated into generous passion his love for the noble and the good—his scorn for the sordid and the evil. And this it is, I presume, that some writer intended to express when he finely asked, “Who amongst us now living can tell what he would have been if Shakspeare had never existed?”

None of my readers will ever, I know, have to resist one temptation to a villainy, a millionth part so hateful as that described in “*Lucretia*” as a monstrous phenomenon. But in the struggles of life, the minor seductions of evil are often repelled by the lively horror derived from the doom which poet or tale-teller has assigned to concessions to the greater. If this were not so, the gigantic and unfamiliar crimes depicted on the heroic stage, would be but idle exaggerations. Who amongst the audience that listen to “*Macbeth*” will have to wade through blood to a throne, yet who may not have some selfish object his ambition would promote, and be tempted by the meaner “juggles of the fiend?” In the picture of a crime dwells the warning to an error. Divers and specious are the allurements to attain to ends coveted by the intellect, through means more or less disapproved by the conscience: and not unsalutary may be the true lesson to be derived from “*Lucretia*” if the impressions it bequeaths though vague and unanalysed, serve to quicken the instantaneous conviction that all which defiles the conscience defeats and defrauds the intellect.

“The first step passed, compels us on to more,
And guilt proves *fate*, which was but *choice* before.”

A task reluctantly undertaken is now fulfilled. I have shown that it is uncharitable and rash to decide in haste against the moral purposes of writers who have no object to deprave—I have shown the

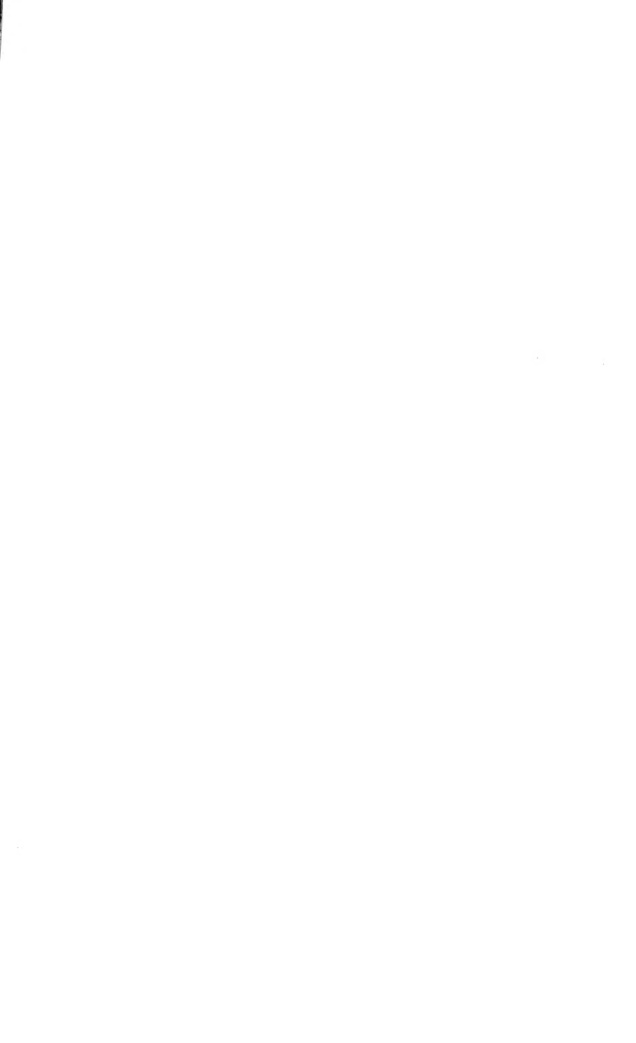
laws and examples which render justifiable in fiction, the delineations of crime—I have exposed the falsity of the charge so reiterated against myself, that habitually, and by preference, I have made criminals my heroes—I have shown that, out of sixteen fictions, to three only can this charge be applied. I have, I trust, made it manifest, that each of these three will bear the test of the strictest reference to the due restrictions to be placed upon their treatment and design; that no sophistry has been employed to vindicate the crime: that the crime has not been of that nature in which the narrative needs, or has found, inflammatory appeals to the more tempting passions—obtruding the presentation of licentious images, and clothing itself in a garb which rather allures than revolts; and, finally, I trust I have made it clear to the reader, that such stern and sombre subjects have not been undertaken without the befitting gravity of thoughtful and earnest purpose.

If I have not entered at length into the subjects of my other works, it is because such self-criticism would have been unpardonable, unless for the imperative necessities of self-defence—each singly considered, their moral tendencies and objects have been tacitly admitted, or only vaguely assailed; and the reader will acknowledge, that in mainly confining myself to those works in which criminals have been made the predominant characters, I have fairly and honestly met the gravamen of the charge that has been urged against me. The rest of my writings, therefore, I confidently leave to the recollections of the general reader; and though, amongst works so numerous, commenced at so early an age, and comprehending delineations of life, with its manners and its passions, so widely various, there may occur, unavoidably, some errors of judgment, some passages too lightly considered,—(and what writer could bear a malignant research through more than forty volumes, made with a design of interpreting every sentence to the worst?)—yet I am convinced that the result of any candid survey would establish the fact, that all those works were conceived with the heartfelt desire to minister, however humbly, to truth and good, and executed with a reverent care to unsettle no man's mind as to the clear principles of religion—or the broad distinctions which the conscience has established between what we should aspire to, and what we should avoid.

This vindication, which, I think, has been conducted in that fair spirit of dispassionate argument which I prescribed to myself at the commencement, shall be sent to those whose charges, less temperately made, have called it forth. It is at their option to treat it with

silence—or, if it so please them, in the same tone, and with recourse to the same arts, by which they have previously sought to pervert my meaning, and degrade my name ; or why should I think so ill, even of enemies, as not to hope that some amongst them, at least, while retaining fairly their opinion of the literary demerits of my writings, may retract what alone I have the right to complain of—viz., heedless and unconsidered misstatements as to their honest tendency and design ? Be this as it may—though the wrong that has been done me may not, and cannot, be readily and lightly repaired—though I am aware that many who never read my works have yet read, and may be long impressed by the attacks of their assailants—that many more, who have read both the works and the attacks will never read this explanation of the one and this reply to the other—nay, even though these pages, like the works that preceded them, may be garbled and distorted from their meaning,—yet I am immovably persuaded that, from few to more, from the segment to the circle, the main truths I have stated will gradually, but surely, penetrate and extend ; and that, whatever literary faults and blemishes in my writings may be justly condemned, soon or late, the author will be held to have given an unanswerable vindication of the legitimate selection of his materials, and his conscientious sense of his more serious responsibilities.

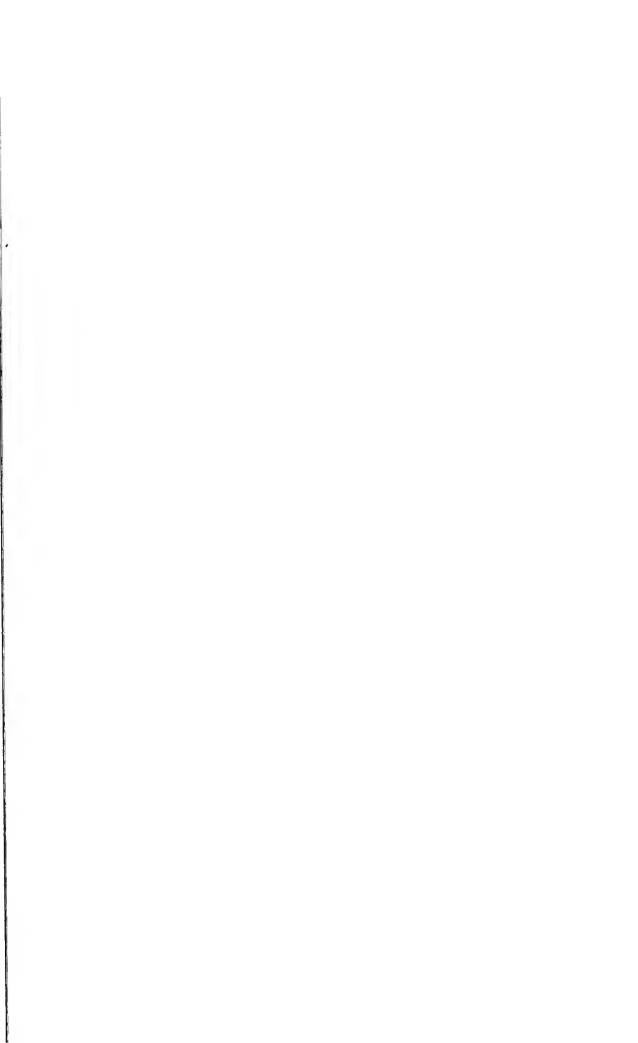
THE END













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